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ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

THE DEVELOPMENT YEARS

CURT NELSON

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INTRODUCTION

This document was produced to consolidate the bits and pieces of the early history of the Itasca Park Forestry School and to "flesh out" this history by both historical and personal events. The history that now exists is in several documents and cover smaller increments of time or are lacking in details. An attempt is made herein to interconnect these pieces in a chronological document, starting in 1909 and carrying on to recent times. The author lived year around at the resident manager's home on the Itasca campus from 1928 to 1943. He also worked as a laborer on the campus every summer from 1946 through 1949.

The observed and experienced history by the author has been utilized to supplement the existing pieces of the history that the author was able to find in other documents. Personal as well as historical events are included.

Emphasis is definitely on the Forestry portion of the School's development, since the Biology sessions did not begin until 1935, 26 years after the establishment of the Forestry School. This is not to belittle the Biology School's impact on the campus, but to fill in a missing portion of early history. Dr. Alexander Hodson's book on the history of the Biology Sessions, issued in 1979, covers that history very well, but only touches on the early Forestry history. Indeed, Hodson's book was used extensively as a guide in producing this document.

It is not the purpose of this document to repeat the data in Dr. Hodson's book, or John Dobie's excellent book, "The Itasca Story", or any of the other documents utilized, but rather to supplement their content. Some repitition must result however, in order to establish the relationship between the various documents.

Since the author had little contact with the academics of the Forestry School, but was mostly involved with the buildings and grounds evolution and maintenance, the early history presented here is slanted in that direction. It also relates personal contacts with the University personnel.

Unfortunately, the history that exists in written form for the Forestry School is sketchy and has many gaps. In addition, the people who knew this early history are largely deceased by this time. Attempts were made to track down offspring of the deceased generation and a few were very fruitful but the majority led to dead ends.

The gnawing thought exists in the author's mind that some cache of information exists in some unprobed area. For example, the searches in the various University libraries could be unsuccessful merely by not using the correct topic. It was often a surprise to find so little in areas where expectations

were great. This was true of the University archives, many University libraries, and the Minnesota History Center.

It is the author's sincere hope that the readers will find the contents of interest. It was felt that it was important to record these recollections before they also disappear. Since Itasca State Park was undoubtedly a unique and wonderful place to spend a childhood, the author found the writing of these memoirs a pleasureable experience.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL
THE DEVELOPMENT YEARS

IN THE BEGINNING

The event which established the Lake Itasca Forestry School occurred in 1907, when Professor Samuel B. Green, Chief of the Division of Horticulture and Forestry at the University of Minnesota, received permission from the State Forestry Board to establish a summer station in Itasca State Park. Actual work on the site was started in that same year, when a small group of forestry students, under the direction of Professor Edward G. Cheyney, cut fire breaks in the park. Another group of forestry students from the class of 1909 continued in 1908 that work that had started a year earlier. The first actual academic work was begun in the summer of 1909, when eleven foresters, in their junior year at the University, traveled to Itasca Park to undertake classes for a sixteen week period. Formal classes were only a part of their duties since there was much other field work to accomplish, such as continues clearing of needed areas.

They were taught silviculture by Professor Cheyney and dendrology and general forestry by Professor John P. Wentling. Professor Green was also present during part of this time and probably taught some classes. The conditions at Itasca were extremely primitive and the students lived in two-man tents, furnished them and erected near the the shore of Lake Itasca. This was apparently in the area now occupied by the recreation hall/dining hall, and earlier, the bunk house (student dormitory).

A PRIMITIVE CAMPUS

The area to be utilized by the University Forestry School was then occupied by the State of Minnesota for purposes of governing and maintaining Itasca State Park, (established in 1891) therefore, the few buildings existing were Park Headquarters owned. The major building on the site was a large house, built in 1896, which housed Itasca Park maintenance personnel and the Park Superintendent. This frame building was later called the Green house, (presumably after Professor Green) and was located where several laboratories exist today, about midway between the University Resident Manager's dwelling and Lake Itasca. There was another frame building northwest of the Green house and closer to the lake, near where the dining hall and recreation building now stands. That apparently was also a State Park building. A building southeast of the green house and perhaps 100 feet distant was probably a barn for cows or horses. Southwest of the Green house a log ice house existed.

There is conflicting historical data on another large log building situated about 100 feet west of the Green house. Some sources called this building a horse barn and indicates it was used by the forestry students for a temporary class room, after

it's function as a horse barn ceased. Another early article refers to a log building in the area as the original lodge building, constructed before Douglas Lodge was built on the southeast arm of Lake Itasca, in 1905. Since the building was two story, with many windows in it, plus a porch on both levels on the north end, the lodge concept appears more logical. In addition, several pictures of the work activities of that early period show a team of oxen, owned by Park Headquarters, being utilized. The use of horses by the Park was apparent in the early 30's period but it is unclear if horses were also used in the 1910 and 1920 era. If the University built the building as a horse barn it seems it would have had little usage for that function, since few students owned horses. It also seems logical that the University would have built buildings for students and faculty before building horse barns. Some writings imply that the horse barn was remodelled into a classroom in the early years. Another explanation for these contradictions may be that there were two buildings involved. Nevertheless, the horse barn theory seems to dominate the existing history.

These buildings were located well back from the lake but near the main road which ran through the Park at that time, dividing the University campus area. Apparently the faculty, the cook, and other support personnel were housed in the Green house in 1909, 1910, and 1911, until the first University buildings were constructed.

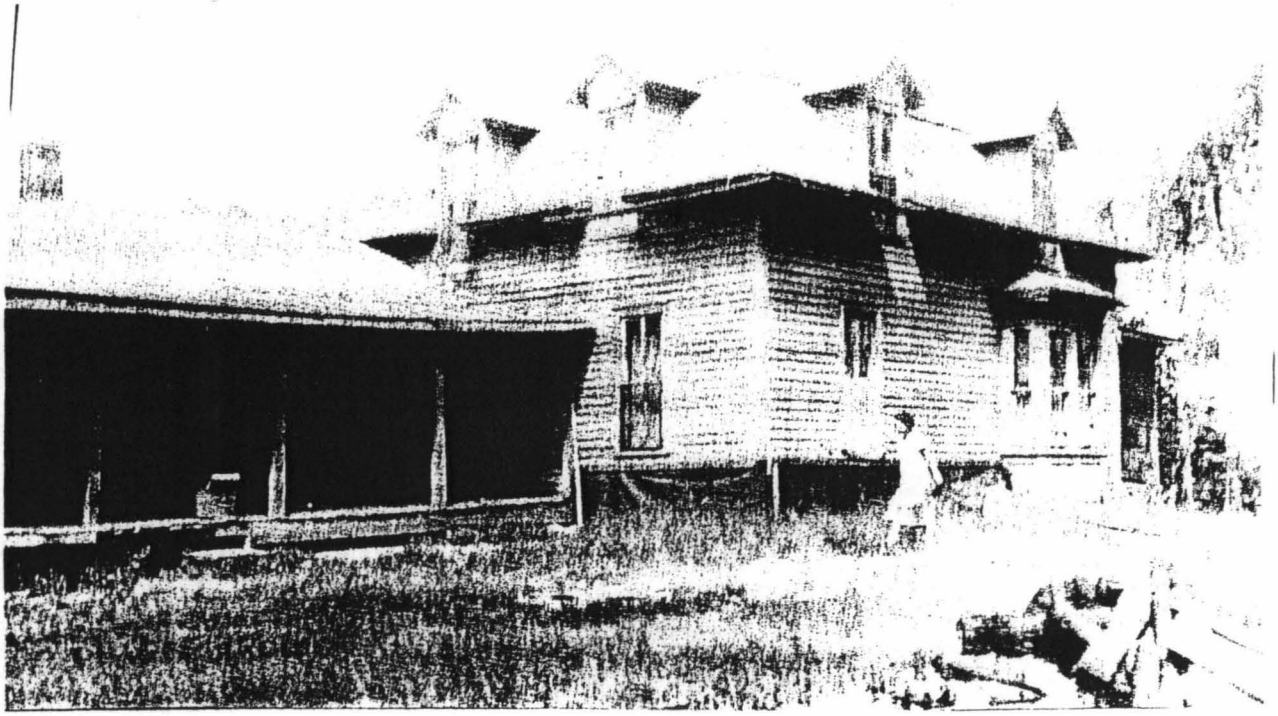
THE FIRST CLASSES

The first classes were primarily held in the field and many consisted of training on the job. The frame building (a Park building) that existed northwest of the green house and near the current site of the dining and recreation hall, was used as a temporary lecture hall. A tree nursery was also established on the School site during these early years and the forestry students spent much of their time working there. The nursery was located north of the resident manager's house and across the road from it, occupying several acres of land. The nursery was an active part of the campus until 1934, when its operation was abandoned. One of the major duties of the resident manager was to operate the tree nursery. In 1933, records indicate about 45000 seedlings were planted, primarily white and red pine. The pine seedlings were apparently shipped to St. Paul.

TRANSPORTATION

In 1909, and for several years hence, the major form of travel to Itasca Park from St. Paul was by train to Park Rapids, a town 25 miles south of the Forestry School. The only means of transportation for this 25-mile journey was a stage, pulled by a team of horses, carrying mail on this northern route. The forestry students were often obliged to walk this route since the stage was often only able to carry their gear to the Park. The entire journey took about eight hours, with a stop

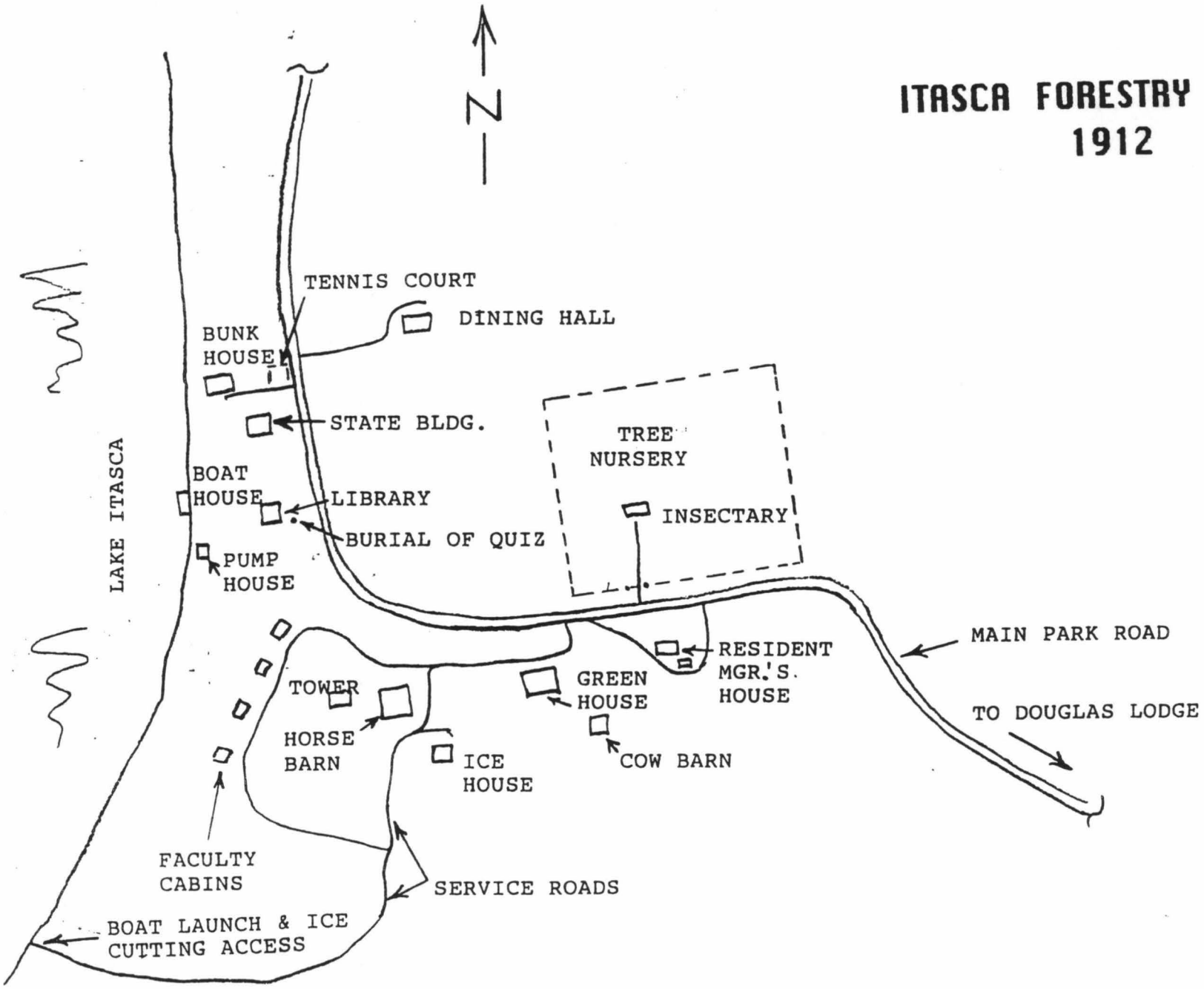
for lunch at Arago, a small wayside farm about halfway to the Park. Arago was also a postoffice and remained so for many years after.



THE STATE HOUSE--LATER CALLED THE GREEN HOUSE

The original Itasca Park Headquarters building Used jointly by U. of M. and Park personnel from 1909 to 1936.

ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL
1912



JUNIOR & FRESHMAN FORESTERS

During the years 1909 through 1911 only juniors from St Paul came to Itasca. The juniors were there for sixteen weeks, starting as early as late April. These students had to be rugged indeed to live in tents at that early springtime, when there often was still snow on the ground and the ice did not leave Lake Itasca, often until the early half of May!

Starting in 1912 a freshman class also began their training session of six weeks at the school, starting about June 15, overlapping the junior session. One of the members of this first freshman class of eight students was Thorvald Schantz-Hansen, later to become a University professor and ultimately become director of both the Itasca and Cloquet forestry stations, in 1940.

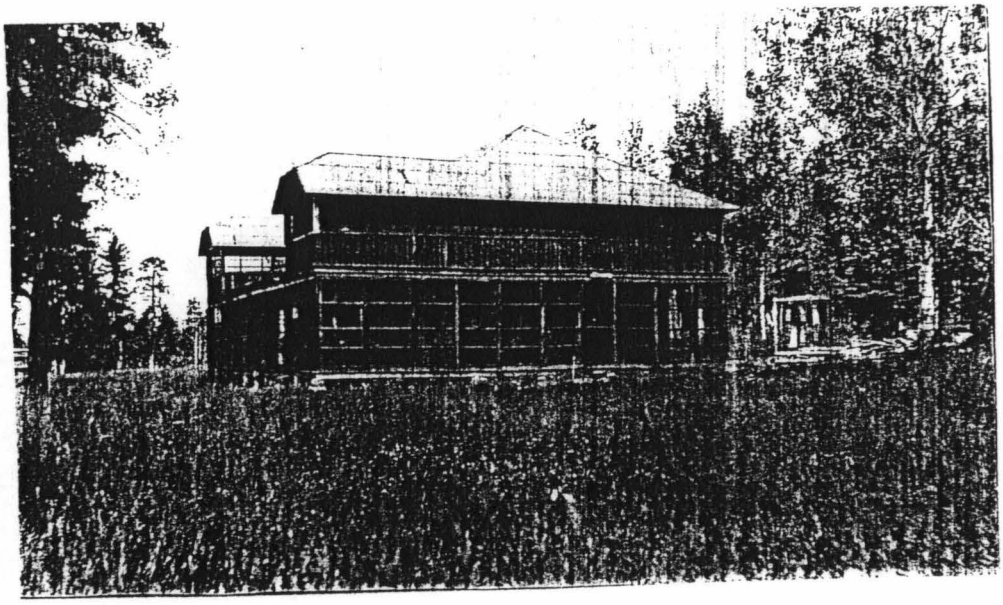
UNIVERSITY CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

In 1911, construction began on the first University buildings on the Lake Itasca campus. A log building, used as a library and classroom was built, located about midway between the faculty cabin row and the student dormitory. This building faced Lake Itasca, and was located in the area now occupied by women's cabins. The library was a one and one half story building. The main floor had a large room in the center with a fireplace. An open porch was on the lake side of the building, and a hand pump well in front. About that same time a log dining hall (called a cook shack) was built up on a hill and further east from the lake. This building had a dining room as well as a kitchen with wood burning stoves. On the partial second floor, living space was provided for the cooks--an extremely hot place to sleep in the summer. Later, an old circular saw blade, about 4 feet in diameter was hung on the outside of this log building and was used as an effective dinner bell when hit with a piece of cast iron pipe.

Also in 1911, two log faculty cabins were built, facing the lake, and further west of the log "horse barn". Each cabin had a screened porch facing the lake, and was equipped with an ice box, a wood-burning cook stove, and and outdoor toilet on the side opposite the lake. Two of the first four faculty cabins built also had fireplaces in the living area.

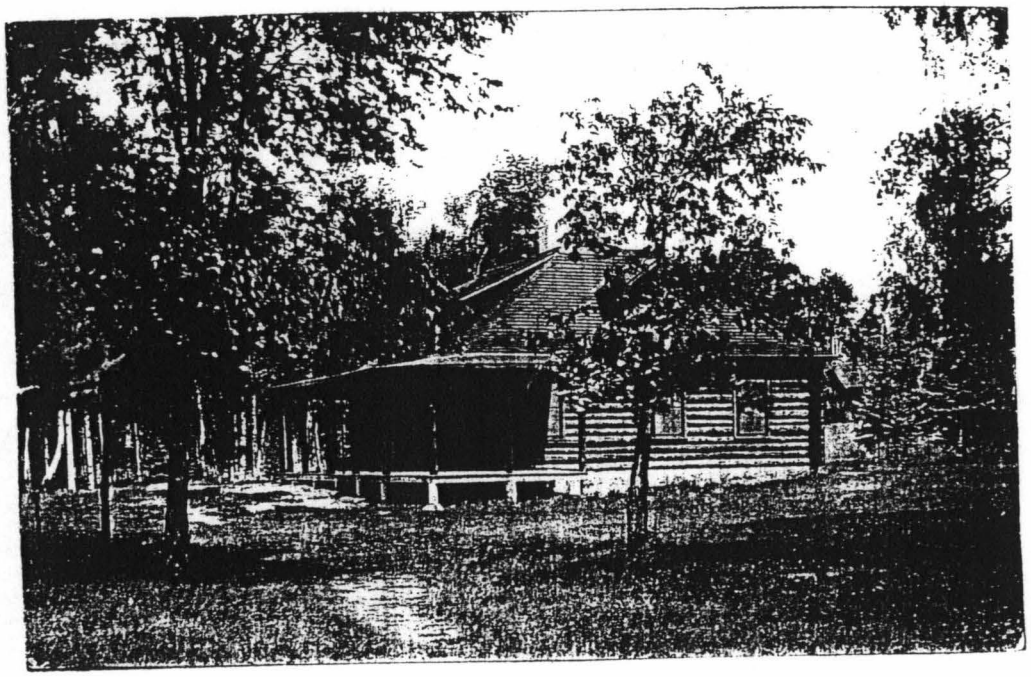
In 1912, a student dormitory was built in addition to two more faculty cabins, all of logs. The forestry students could finally move out of their tents into the dormitory and the faculty could bring their families to the Park. Of course there was no running water or electricity so living was still only a little less primitive.

The student dormitory became known as the "bunk house". It was a two story building with porches on both upper and lower levels and a large stone fireplace in a recreation room on the



THE BUNK HOUSE IN 1912, SOUTH SIDE.

Picture by T. Schantz-Hansen



THE LIBRARY IN 1912, SOUTH SIDE. (The Bat House)

Picture by T. Schantz-Hansen

main floor. The building was designed to house about thirty students. The fireplace was apparently built as a memorial to the class of 1913, as it contained a plaque with 15 names enscribed on it. This was the junior class that took training at the school the summer of 1912. There were 8 forestry freshman present on the campus that summer also. Just east of the bunk house, near the main road through the Park, a tennis court existed.

THE FACULTY

The faculty in 1909 and 1910 consisted of Professor E. G. Cheyney, Samuel B. Green, who was chief of the division, and Professor John P. Wentling. Samuel Green unfortunately had a stroke which was fatal to him in 1910, while inspecting the horse barn at the Itasca station. E. G. Cheyney then took over as head of the College of Forestry.

In 1911, the faculty was listed as follows:

E. G. Cheyney	Mensuration
J. P. Wentling	Silviculture
J. T. Stewart	Surveying
A. G. Ruggles	Mycology
E. M. Freeman	Plant Pathology

1913 CONDITIONS

In 1913, Harry Branigan was hired as the resident manager and to oversee the extensive tree nursery work. A resident manager's dwelling was apparently built about that time, a semi-log building separated from the rest of the campus and further east from the lake. Another log building was also built in the nursery in the early years to house tools and for additional faculty use. Both of these buildings utilized vertical logs in their construction, a departure from the other log buildings on the campus.

Drinking water was available at several wells on campus with hand pumps. One was located in front of the library building, another near the Green house and one by the cook shack. An ice house also was in existance southwest of the Green house. Ice had to hauled from there to each of the faculty cabins as well as to the cook shack and the resident manager's house to service ice boxes. The ice blocks were hauled to the various buildings using wheelbarrows. Later, an "ice cart" was constructed from two large wagon wheels and a low-slung wood basket between.

FORESTRY STUDENT DUTIES

The forestry students in the early years of the school had many duties in addition to attendance at classes. For example, they apparently took part in a log drive down the Mississippi from Lake Itasca in 1911. The students also had duties of sawing

and splitting wood for the cook shack and the bunk house fireplace. It is assumed that they also helped with some of the construction of the log buildings being built at that time. A cow was purchased for the summer to have fresh milk and the foresters took turns tending the animal. Also, there was "kitchen police" duties at the cook shack intermittently. The tree nursery work consisted of planting and caring for seedlings, as well as reforestation with older trees at various locations in the Itasca vicinity. Occasionally the students were called upon for fire fighting duties as required.

RESIDENT MANAGER'S DUTIES

Some of the duties of the resident manager included keeping the kerosene and gasoline lanterns filled and maintained, for the students use in the library and class room. There was also a U.S. Weather Bureau weather station located in the tree nursery where the resident manager recorded minimum and maximum temperatures, rainfall, snowfall, wind direction, and character of each day. Each month a summary report was sent in to the Bureau headquarters.

Another task, undertaken in the winter, was putting up the ice blocks needed for each summer, to supply the ice boxes in the faculty cabins, the cook shack, and the residents manager's home. The ice was sawed by hand out of Lake Itasca, usually about the latter half of December, when the ice was at least 12 inches thick. The resident manager usually had to hire some help for this task since it had to be done in a relatively short period to avoid letting the ice get too thick. The ice was hauled in off the lake by horse and sleigh, or later by truck, packed in layers in the ice house under a heavy blanket of sawdust for insulation. All residents of the campus were obliged to dig ice blocks out of the ice house to stock their ice boxes during the summer. A marker or sign was to be left at the point where each person dug out his ice block, so that the next visitor could determine the correct place to dig to find the end of the row of ice blocks under the sawdust. The blocks were taken out and washed clean of sawdust before being carted to each residence by the occupant. Ice tongs were supplied for lifting the block up to the ice chamber in the ice box. The dining hall had the largest ice boxes so several blocks were hauled up the hill by the forestry students to supply that box.

In the early years, the forestry students supplied the dining hall with split wood for the cook stoves. Later, when the campus activities became more formal, the resident manager took on this duty as well as supplying the wood for fireplaces and the faculty cabin cook stoves. The wood was often obtained in the campus area, where the much of the grounds contained stands of quaking aspen, which were cleared to expand the building areas. Since the wood needed to be dried before burning, a woodlot was established south of the main campus and the wood was stored there for seasoning. The logs of from about 8 to

12 feet in length were hauled to the woodlot and piled until they could be sawed into stove-lengths. Originally, this step was probably done by hand, but in later years a circular saw rig, powered by a gasoline engine was used. This rig was on wheels for ease of movement and probably belonged to Park Headquarters. The sawing operation required at least 3 men. Two men carried the log to the saw and fed it in to cut the proper length, then moved out to clear the saw, slid over for the next piece until the log was completely consumed. The cut pieces were picked up and thrown to a pile at the side by the third man. This work was far from safe but it was far superior to hand sawing.

Most of the wood was split into small pieces for use in the cook stoves on campus. Again, this job was originally done by hand by the forestry students but as the school grew the volume of wood required also grew and a mechanical splitter was employed. The splitter was also on wheels, and probably was used by Park Headquarters. It had a gasoline engine, with a large flywheel, connected to a long shaft, terminating in a sharp wedge. The rotational motion of the flywheel was translated to horizontal back-and-forth motion of the shaft, with the wedge moving toward and near to, a large backing block. The man doing the splitting had to drop the end of a wood chunk in front of the wedge as it drew back, then the wedge split the chunk in one direction and withdrew. He then quickly turned the wood 90 degrees so that the wedge split the chunk into 4 pieces on its next stroke. The split wood was then pulled out and thrown on a pile or placed on a side rack for another worker to throw on the pile. Of course it required another man to feed new wood chunks to the side tray for the man doing the splitting. It was obviously a tricky job to avoid getting fingers pinched or cut, and particularly when the wood chunk did not split cleanly and hung up on the moving wedge! Later, all the split wood was piled in neat ranks, to facilitate drying.

PARK HEADQUARTERS RELOCATION

The Green house existed on the new University Forestry School area until at least 1936. It was apparently used jointly by State Park employees and University personnel. In 1922, a large log building was constructed by the State Park on property about a half mile north of the University campus and on the east side of the main Park Road, Highway 92. this building housed the Park superintendent and the Park maintenance personnel for a number of years. Currently the building is used as a youth hostel, after renovation. Eventually the Green house was no longer needed and was torn down. A cow barn that was located near the Green house had been torn down earlier, some time after 1928. The State Park building near the lake shore and near where the University bunk house was built was also abandoned and removed sometime before 1928. After the log buildings such as the library and the former horse barn were available to the University, the lake shore State Park building had little usage.

1920 JUNIORS' DIARY

There is little data on which years freshman foresters were at Itasca between 1912 and 1925. The first freshman class was there in 1912 and overlapped the longer junior class time, however, the junior class, starting in 1925 went to the Cloquet Forest Experiment Station for their training. A diary was obtained from the College of Natural Resources for the junior class which was at Itasca in 1920. There were five students. Albert E. Wackerman, Daniel (Ted) Dwyer, Frances V. Ostrowski, Leo A. Isaac, and Hubert Person. They came to Itasca May 6 and departed June 14, a different schedule than earlier junior classes. A summary of their log book follows.

The first three foresters traveled from Park Rapids to Itasca in a truck. Three days later the other two arrived. Harry Branigan was resident manager at the time and these juniors ate at least some of their meals at Branigans, although it appears most meals were at the cook shack on campus. The five lived in the bunk house, apparently on straw ticks for mattresses.

A large part of their time was spent in the tree nursery which was very active at the time and was Harry Branigan's major duties also. Spruce and pine seedlings were the primary types handled. At one time several hundred spruce, pine, and cedar seedlings were planted on Schoolcraft Island by the forestry crew. Samuel Graham, a 1914 graduate, was also present on the campus that spring. The faculty apparently consisted of J. H. Allison, J. P. Wentling, and W. H. Kenety, however, Professor Allison had the greater share of the duties.

The diary indicates that fishing in Lake Itasca was very good and they did a lot of it. These foresters also frequented Douglas Lodge, both for the girls they found there and also they often worked as waiters, particularly on weekends--no mention is made if this was compensated or volunteer time. Transportation for these students was primarily by canoe. They traveled to Douglas Lodge and to Wegmann's store this way.

One of the humorous incidents was when one of the group threw his hat at a waddling porcupine to collect some quills--the hat stuck and followed the porky up a tree, which resulted in much tree climbing and stick throwing to retrieve the quill-filled hat!

BURIAL OF THE QUIZ

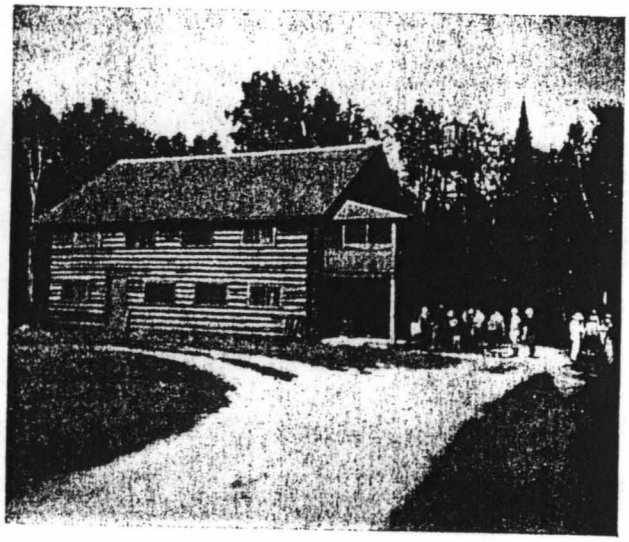
In 1911, a new instructor was added, Dr. E. M. Freeman, later to become dean of the college. He decided that the students should take a written quiz in order to show that they had learned the information he had taught in forest pathology. This was an earth-shaking event for the new school and the students feared that it would set a bad precedent for future classes. The most vocal voiced their concerns to E. G. Cheyney, head of the College and director at the station, but he sided with Doc Freeman. However, the die was cast, and the three students with the hottest fervor plotted and carried out a burial of this unpopular quiz in the ground with a birch log monument to mark the spot. The location of the burial was carried on just east of, and behind the library building. The ceremony was carried out with the appropriate weeping and wailing and costumes on July 19. Apparently Dr. Freeman and his wife observed this ceremony on their way to breakfast at the cook shack that morning and were not amused. Therefore, the quiz may have been buried, but it was not eliminated.

The headstone proclaimed "In Memoriam to the First Quiz--Killed at Itasca--July 19, 1911". The foot marker said "Gone but not Forgotten". This was the start of a tradition which lasted for over thirty years. In the following years the burial ceremony was prefaced by a parade of students, all in ridiculous costumes, starting at the University grounds and going about a mile north into the tourist camp and return, carrying the quiz coffin all the way. The parade was usually accompanied by whatever musical instruments (or reasonable facsimile) were available. After the appropriate weeping and wailing was complete at the quiz gravesite, any students who did not participate in the events were hauled down to the lake and bodily thrown in off the dock, in whatever clothes they were wearing at the time. In the process, almost everyone ended up in the lake, usually including a professor or two! In later years, this usually included Professor R. M. Brown, (Brownie) who desperately tried to avoid the dunking, sometimes crawling under the faculty cabin where he and his family resided. He always was a good sport about the process however.

Bob Brown, son of R. M. Brown, recalls being transported in a wheelbarrow up to the tourist park and back in one of the student parades in the 30's period. Bob was a favorite playmate of the author in childhood days at Itasca.

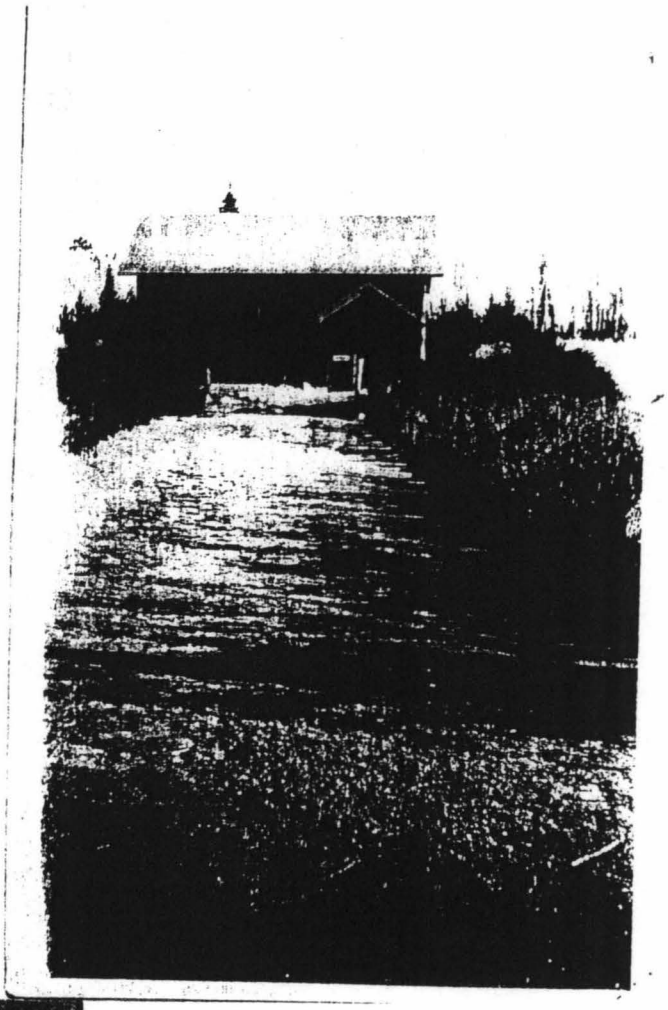
TRIP TO THE INDIAN RESERVATION

During the first few years, the students made a trip to the White Earth Indian Reservation to attend the Chippewa-Sioux peace celebration. Transportation was lacking and therefore these jaunts were partially or wholly made on foot, carrying a back pack. The trip took two days each way, with a campout along the way. It was no place for a tenderfoot!



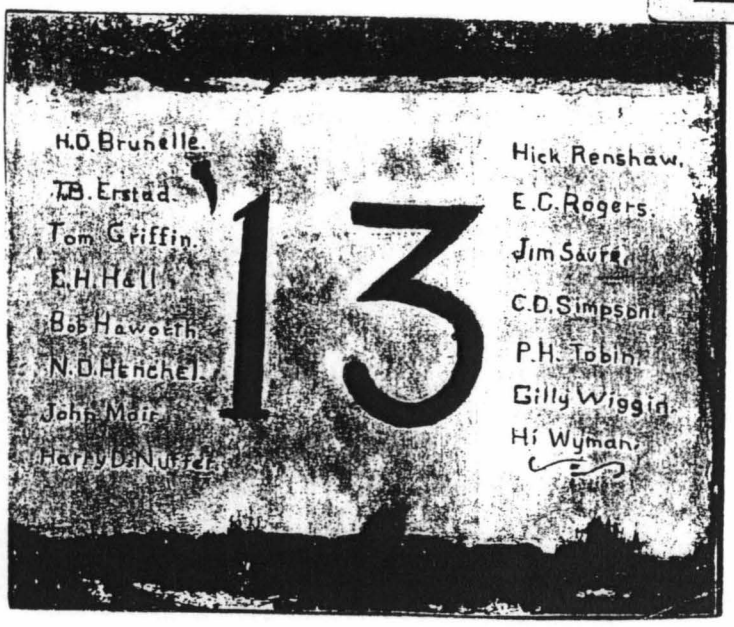
THE OLD "HORSE BARN", TURNED LABORATORY/CLASS ROOM.

Taken in late 30's, looking southwest.
Note water tower in back.



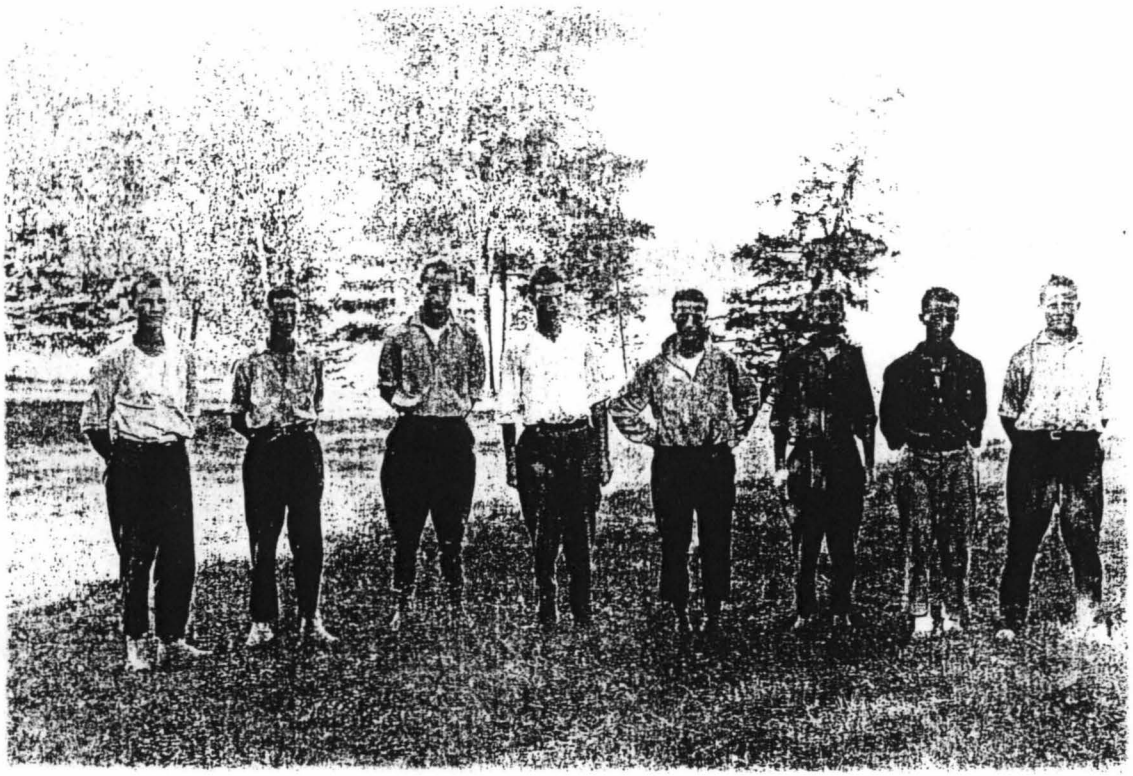
THE ORIGINAL INSECTARY IN THE TREE NURSERY, ABOUT 1929.

South side of building.
Burned down about 1931.
Note vertical logs.



MEMORIAL TO THE 1913 CLASS IN THE BUNK HOUSE FIREPLACE.

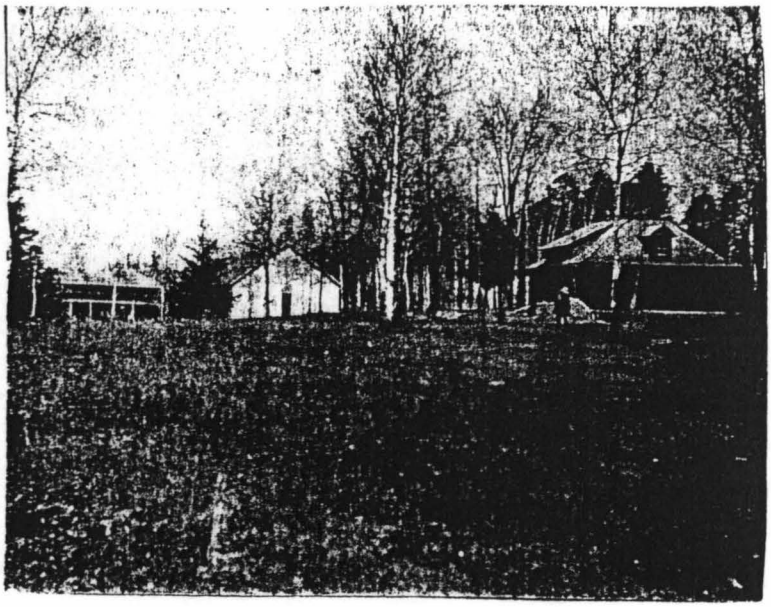
These are the juniors who were at Itasca in 1912.
Picture by Schantz-Hansen.



THE FIRST FRESHMAN CLASS OF FORESTERS AT ITASCA IN 1912

L to R, V. A. Bird, P. C. Sischo, J. D. Chance, P. C. Records, H. M. Dennis, T. Schantz-Hansen, F. D. Duran, C. M. Hawkinson

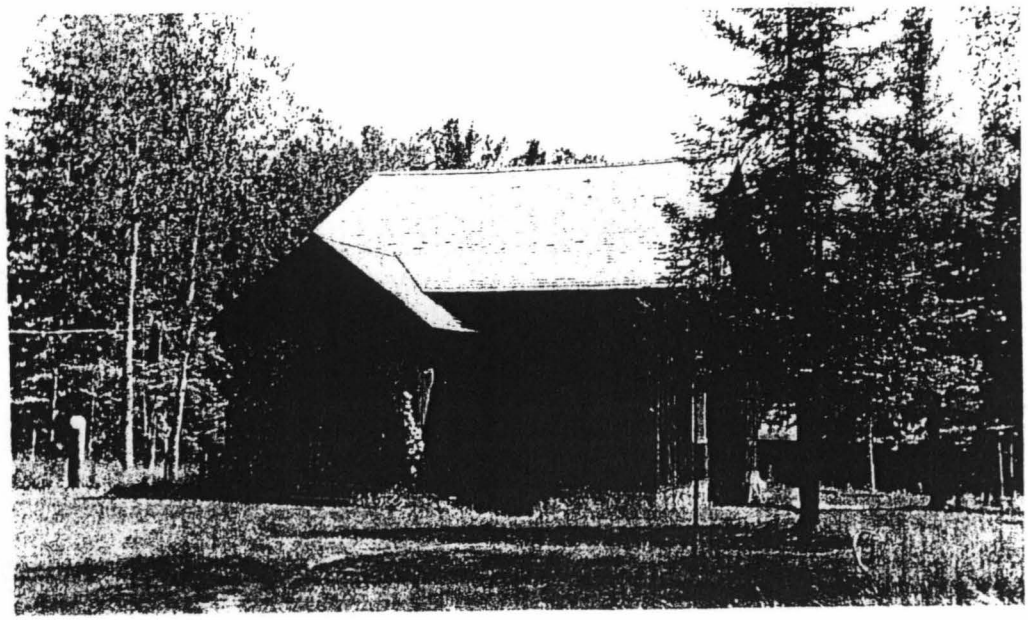
FACULTY CABIN #1, SOUTH SIDE (Built in 1912)
STUDENT CABIN IN BACKGROUND (Built in 1935)



ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL CAMPUS IN 1912, LOOKING NORTH.

On left, Bunk House. Center, Park building used by Forestry students. Right, Library. Picture by T. Schantz-Hansen.

DINING HALL (COOK SHACK) in 1912. Note Circular saw dinner bell. Picture by T. Schantz-Hansen.



RESIDENT MANAGER'S HOUSE ABOUT 1932. NORTH SIDE. Note vertical logs.

BOAT HOUSE AND CANOES

Another building which existed in the early years was a boathouse on the shores of Lake Itasca, near where the bunkhouse was erected. This may have been a State Park building as it only shows up in early photographs. Many of the students owned canoes and many canoed down the Mississippi River to St. Paul after the session at Itasca ended. Since the river headed north out of Lake Itasca and meandered through many lakes north of the Park the journey by river was considerably longer than by road. There was also a dock near the boathouse and a diving raft anchored out in the lake about 100 feet from the dock. Canoes were used extensively for transportation to Douglas Lodge and Wegmann's store by the students.

FACULTY ADDITIONS

About 1913 Dr. C. Otto Rosendahl was hired to teach botany at the Itasca Forest School and he continued there until 1943. Dr. Rosendahl had a physical imparity which caused him to be unable to stand straight and in addition he walked with a decided limp. This handicap did not slow him down in his jaunts in the woods, pointing out the plants to the students--they had trouble keeping up!

Also in 1913, Professor John H. Allison was added to the faculty at Itasca, where he taught until 1926. Allison was called "J.H." and taught mensuration.

Dr. Ralph Dawson taught both ornithology and entomology to the forestry students in the early years but the exact dates are unknown. He continued for a great number of years up until 1952 when he retired. During 10 years of this period, Dr. A. C. Hodson and Dr. C.E. Mickel took over the teaching duties of Dr. Dawson, probably during the 1930's and 40's. Dawson was a single man and lived in the nursery "insectary" cabin. Hodson and Mickel also resided in the insectary since they did not bring their families to Itasca.

Since the Forestry faculty changes were so infrequent for a great number of years, the faculty cabins became known by their usual occupants. For example, Cheyney's cabin was always cabin number 4, and Rosendahl's was number 3 (currently the director's cabin spot).

WATER SYSTEM

A wood water tower, supporting a large metal tank, was part of the water system for the campus. The tower was located just west of the two story log classroom and was about 50 feet tall. The source of water for this structure was Lake Itasca. A gasoline powered pump was located on the lakeshore with a long pipe protruding out into the lake for water pickup. This pump

was in a small building south of the bunk house. This lake water was piped into the faculty cabins and presumably to several of the Park Headquarters buildings. The tower was rebuilt in the early 30's by building the new tower surrounding the old one and then tearing down the old structure. This way the tank was not disturbed.

Drinking water still had to be carried from the 3 hand-pumped wells on campus. This system existed until 1940 when the health department dictated a change to drinking water. A well was then dug near the old horse barn and a pressure tank installed underground to service all the buildings. The tower and tank were abandoned at that time. At a later date the tower and tank were removed.

THE SCOUTMASTERS

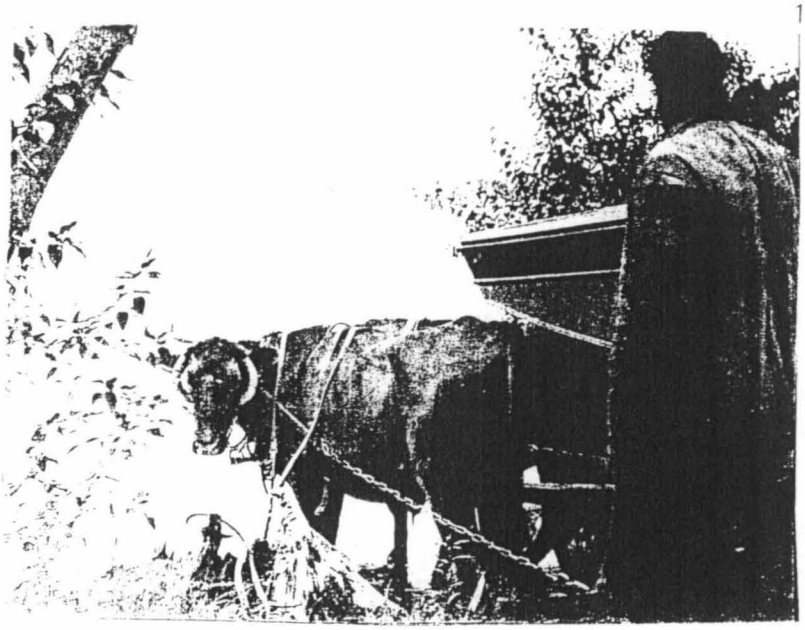
The school was not operated in 1918, due to World War I, but the following year the school was again in session and in addition, a University of Scouting was initiated at the station. This was a week-long course, consisting of nature studies and crafts, taught by University professors as well as instructors from other schools. The course usually commenced during the first week in August, and was attended by about 100 Scoutmasters from Region 10 (included Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Montana). A group of Eagle Scouts performed the kitchen duties for the group. The station facilities were badly overloaded with this large group but in spite of all the course was successful. In later years, the Scoutmasters put on an evening program during the latter part of their week and invited local residents to attend. It was usually held at the local camp grounds and became a very popular event.

THE SCOW

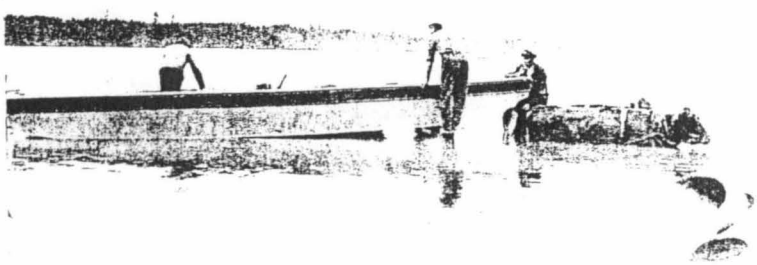
A large, flat-bottom boat was available for acquatic studies at the station, beginning in 1912. It had an inboard engine and was large enough to accommmodate several sudents and their instructer. It was fondly named the Scow, and was used until about 1932.

CHANGES IN 1925-1926 ERA

About 1925, the forestry juniors were transferred to the Cloquet Forest Expirement Station for their training. By this time the freshman group was growing larger and the Itasca station facilities were stretched to their limit. In 1926, a major expansion and remodelling on the bunk house was done, adding a great deal of space on both upper and lower floors, on the inside of the building, as well as the porches, and showers and washrooms were added on the first floor. When the classes were large, some students still had to bunk on the screened porches, which provided little protection from inclement weather. Much later, canvas curtains were provided to cover the screens



THE LAUNCHING OF THE NEW SCOW IN 1912. Picture by T. Schantz-Hansen.



SCOW LAUNCHED IN ITASCA

Oxen were State owned.
Picture by Schantz-Hansen.

THE ORIGINAL BURIAL OF QUIZ SITE, ERECTED IN 1911.

Picture by T. Schantz-Hansen.

EARLY FACULTY AT ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL

Prof. E. G. Cheyney	1909-1947	Silviculture, mensuration
Prof. Samuel B. Green	1909-1910	
Prof. John P. Wentling	1909-1927	Silviculture
Prof. J. H. Allison	1913-1926	Mensuration
Dr. E. M. Freeman	1911-	Forest pathology
Dr. C. Otto Rosendahl	1913-1943	Botany
Dr. Ralph Dawson	-1952	Entomology, ornithology
Prof. A. G. Ruggles	1911-	Mycology
J. T. Stewart	1911-	Surveying
Leslie W. Orr	1930-1932	Entomology
Prof. Randolph M. Brown	1927-1965	Mensuration
Dr. Alexander C. Hodson	1935-	Entomology
Dr. Clarence E. Mickel	1935-	Ornithology
Dr. Henry L Hansen	1947-	Silvics (Field ecology)
Dr. Louis W. Rees	1945-1962	Botany, dendrology.

Note: Forestry Session closed during 1918 and 1944.

in cold or rainy weather. When class size dictated, straw ticks were used for mattresses, since there were insufficient cotton mattresses.

RESIDENT MANAGER CHANGE

In early 1928, Harry Branigan, the resident manager since 1913, resigned and Walter Nelson took over in May. The resident manager at that time still was not furnished a maintenance shop or tools, and had only a small storage building near the residence. About 1930, a maintenance shop was built near the residence and electrical power was available on a very limited basis for the first time. A gasoline engine driven generator was installed in the maintenance shop and provided power for lighting only during evening hours. This generator produced 32 volts DC, a common voltage used for electrifying farms in that period. It is unclear whether the power was distributed beyond the resident manager's house. Later, a larger steam powered generator was installed at Park Headquarters and supplied power for the entire Park but again for only limited hours. REA power was not available until 1941.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

There was only one telephone available on the campus in the early days and that was in the resident manager's home. The local operator was at Park Headquarters and telephone service was only available from 8 am until 8 pm each day. The phones in the Park each had a special code of long and short rings so that the telephone owner would know which call was theirs. When calls came in for faculty members or students, the resident manager or members of his family were obliged to go to the campus area and find the person being called.

RESIDENT MANAGER'S HOUSE

The resident manager's house, even by 1928, was not a very desireable home, particularly for year round use. It was built of logs on the first floor, set in vertical fashion, and the second floor (a partial floor space) was of frame construction. The house was small, with one bedroom on the main floor and one upstairs. The kitchen was originally very tiny, but was enlarged prior to 1928, with an attached eating area built on with no basement under it. In summer this dining room was a pleasant, though small space, but in winter the floor was so cold that it was used as a refrigerator by Mrs. Walter Nelson. The floor slanted down into the eating area. The new resident manager, Walter Nelson, found no cupboards in the kitchen, the sink drained away from the drain, and the cistern pump was not secured to the counter but hung at an odd angle. There was only one tiny closet in the house. There was no electricity nor indoor toilet or bath.

The house was heated by a wood burning furnace in the basement

with gravity heat distribution. Every fall the basement had to be filled with 16 cords of firewood to keep the place warm. The floor of the house was cold in winter so Walter built a 3-foot high wood retaining wall around the living room side and filled it with sawdust, so that there was about a foot of extra insulation for the floor. Each spring this had to be dismantled and the sawdust hauled back to the ice house.

The house had a screen porch on the north side, which turned out to be a delightful spot in the summer. There were many bats in the attic and their squeaking and scratching could be clearly heard in the upstairs rooms, since there was no insulation. On the back of the house, a ramshackle entry room had been built, which housed the ice box, woodbox, (for the kitchen range) and general storage. The woods came close to the house and raccoons and skunks freely roamed the area at night, sometimes causing noises and noxious odors. Mrs. Nelson declared that she would only stay one year but of course ended up staying 32 years!

The only other building at the residence (besides the outhouse) was a storage shed near the back door. It was full of junk which had to be disposed of and then Walter was able to store his Model T Ford in it in winter. The only tools on the place were a level and a square so Walter was obliged to furnish his own tools for maintenace and his Model T to get around the area.

Drinking water was only available at a hand pump near the Green house, several hundred feet west of the house. A cistern in the basement of the house collected rainwater from the roof and provided water for washing clothes and bodies. Baths and clothes washing had to be done in the tiny kitchen in a washtub on the floor. This was a warm spot since it was right in front of the wood-burning cook stove.

1927 CHANGES

In 1927, a new professor arrived at Itasca to teach mensuration. He was Professor R. M. Brown, known to all as "Brownie". J. P. Wentling had retired at that time. Brownie took over the duties formerly performed by Allison. Brownie continued to teach at Itasca until his retirement in 1965.

Also in 1927, the forestry students at Itasca constructed a memorial archway of logs, towering over the main Park road that at that time went through the campus. A sign, hanging from the top of the arch was made of wood pieces, proclaiming "University of Minnesota, School of Forestry, 1927. The arch was about 20 feet tall, with four main poles supporting it, over the path going to the cook shack from the bunk house. This memorial existed until 1939, when a parking lot was constructed in the area to accommodate student automobiles. At that time the Park road was changed so that it no longer went through the campus.

A diving tower was part of the regular equipment at the School and was anchored out in the lake, near the library area. Also, Forester's Day was celebrated during the session each summer, with canoe races, log rolling, and other forester type contests.

LOCAL HIRED HELP

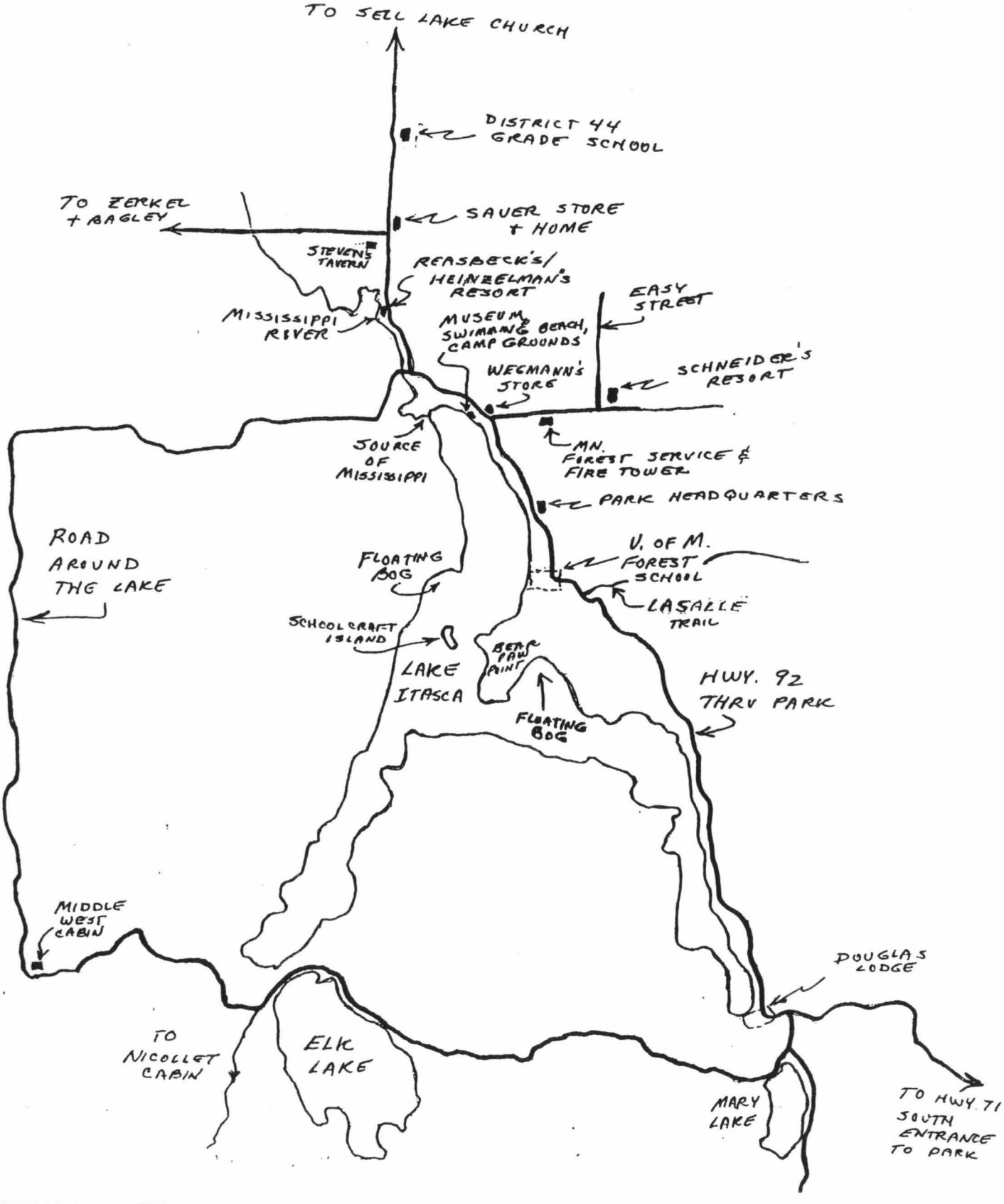
As the years passed, running water was added to many buildings and this necessitated a sewage system. At Itasca, the soil is primarily sand or gravel so cesspools worked well and were used throughout the campus. The cesspool holes were dug by hand, as were all the connecting water line trenches. These added tasks were beyond the resident manager's ability to accomplish as they were in addition to the growing maintenance of the grounds and buildings as the school expanded. Hired labor had to be brought in and the source for the labor was to be local farmers and woodsmen living near the Park. These men were happy to have extra income, since the farms in the area were small and afforded only a meager living. These farmers and woodsmen were used to heavy work so the University tasks fit their background. As the campus grew, many of these local residents were employed for many years in the summer, and the entire community benefited.

One of the local men that Walter Nelson hired for labor on the campus was Erick Wallin. Erick was not only a tireless worker, he was also an excellent carpenter and woodworker. However, his devotion to the Itasca campus was exemplary, and he became a fixture there as the campus grew. When construction was required, Erick knew exactly what and how to do it and accomplished his tasks with little direction. Later, Erick worked year around on the University grounds, since the shop there became better equipped and parts for the new buildings could be built in the winter, preparing for construction the following summer. Erick and Walter worked as a team successfully for many years and many times were able to make needed items out of whatever they could scrounge on the campus, since very little maintenance money was available.

Castoff furniture from the twin city campuses were sent to the Itasca facility and Walter and Erick repaired, modified, and painted these items for use in the faculty cabins as well as for the student class rooms and dormitories. These pieces were in use for many years until funds became available much later.

Mrs. Nelson often had to cook a noon meal for the workmen on the campus during the summer months. She also washed the curtains in the faculty cabins during the off season, and rehung them at the windows.

ITASCA STATE PARK
1928



FACULTY ACCOMMODATIONS

The faculty had two stores in the local area in which to buy staples in food and hardware, but it hardly compared with their twin city stores. About one mile north of the campus, Theodore (Teddy) Wegmann had a store which stocked groceries, cigarettes, fishing equipment and other small hardware items. Wegmann was a pioneer in the Itasca area and had established a store many years previously in a log cabin. About two and a half miles north of the campus was Sauer's general store, but with a generally better stock of items. Ernest Sauer was also an Itasca area pioneer and had also originally had his store in a log cabin. Later, his son,Bob, had built a frame building near the highway and established a larger store there. The Lake Itasca post office was also located on the premises. Most faculty members elected to go to one of the nearest towns to do their major shopping. Park Rapids, a town of about 2000 residents, was 25 miles south of the station, while Bemidji, a town of near 10000 population, was 35 miles northeast of the Park.

During the thirties period, several vendors started summer routes to sell groceries (Strandlien), meat (Bob Bauman), and chickens (Pearson). These enterprising persons recognized a need for services of this sort and came around during the summer months with products for sale in their trucks and vans. The Nelsons were regular customers for these services and some of the faculty members also took advantage of this food right at the door. Sometimes faculty members purchased chickens from local residents living north of the Park. A story was told about one such encounter when a faculty member went to a home and found chickens running right through the kitchen! The lady asked the professor which of the roaming chickens he wanted!

LOCAL COOKS

When the cook shack was first built, Mrs. Wegmann (Teddy Wegmann's wife) and Clara Teigland, a lady from north of the Park, were hired to cook for the student body. Harry Branigan, the first resident manager, came from the east and was a single man. In 1916 he married Clara Teigland and established their home there on the station, where they raised two children until their departure in early 1928. Harry established a private nursery north of Itasca Park at his farm.

MILK SUPPLY

When Walter Nelson took the resident manager's position at the station, he decided to buy a cow to have fresh milk and cream for his family of three boys. There was a good sized field south east of the Green house and west of the house that was sufficient for grazing and was probably utilized by the Park Headquarters' cows previously. It is likely also that at least a portion of the pasture fence used by Headquarters was used

by Walter after the Headquarters' personnel had moved north to their new area. The Nelson family found that they had a surplus of milk, even with just one cow, and they sold milk to some of the faculty members for eight cents per quart, delivered to their door by the Nelson boys.

RESIDENT MANAGER ACTIVITIES

The Nelsons also established a vegetable garden in a portion of the pasture space, fencing it off from the cow. Les and Blanche Orr of the University faculty also had a garden in this same area about 1930-31. Mrs. Nelson acquired great skill at making caramel rolls so that on baking days the Browns and the Cheyneys each had a standing order for a dozen fresh rolls, which were delivered to their respective cabins by the Nelson sons.

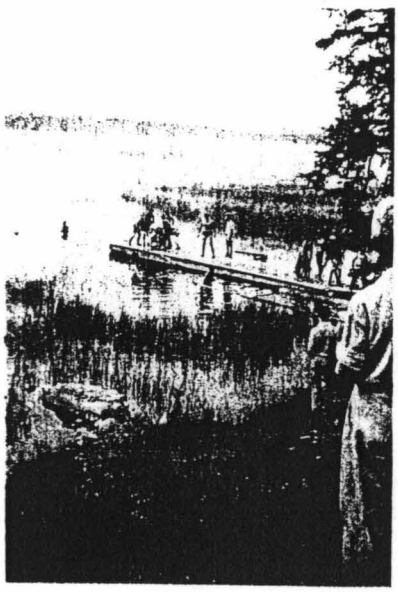
Freda Nelson was always ready to brew a hot pot of coffee and put on a luncheon spread for the University faculty members when they came by, for whatever reason. Walter always took daily coffee breaks at home at 10 am and 3 pm, often accompanied by faculty members.

In the early years garbage cans were used by the faculty and the dining hall to dispose of food wastes. This meant that the resident manager had to collect and haul this refuse to the local dump periodically. It also presented a problem for cleanliness, since raccoons were common visitors to the campus at night and raided the garbage cans with the resulting mess. Walter Nelson devised a "garbage pit" which solved both of these problems. The pit was dug and walled in the same way as a cess pool, but instead of burying the top underground, a platform was built on top of the walls at ground level. In the middle of the platform, a wood "tower" was built, about 3 feet high and 2 feet square, with a hinged cover on top. The user dumped the garbage into the tower (which opened to the pit below) and the garbage disappeared into a relatively odor-free pit which raccoons could not ravage. Since the pit was used only part of the year, the refuse decomposed and was therefore self-maintained. The pits were used successfully at the dining hall as well as the faculty cabins and at the manager's house.

STUDENT PARADE FOLLOWED BY BY BURIAL OF THE QUIZ. 1929

PART OF FORESTERS' PARADE PARTICIPANTS. 1929

STUDENT PARADE, HEADING FOR THE TOURIST PARK. 1935



THE "LAKE PARTY", AFTER BURIAL OF THE QUIZ. 1935

WATER AND SEWAGE SYSTEMS

In the early 30's period, running water was brought into the faculty cabins and toilets and sinks installed. This change required water lines to be installed as well as cess pools to take care of the sewage. At this time the running water was all directly out of Lake Itasca and as such, not drinkable, but it was used for toilets and washing purposes. This was a big step in modernization for the faculty, even though drinking water still had to be carried from the hand pump in front of the library, several hundred feet distant. All the ditches for the water lines and the cess pool pits were dug by hand. Fortunately, the water lines did not have to be below frost depth since the lines were drained each fall by the resident manager.

The cess pools were built of wood, and essentially consisted of a bottomless frame of two-inch lumber. The sides had gaps between the planks to allow for maximum seepage. The top was set unto this frame, and built sturdy enough to allow about two feet of earth covering. The cess pool frame was about six feet on a side and about five feet deep. Since it was only in use during the summer this capacity was adequate, especially considering the sandy soil of Itasca.

MOSQUITOES

The mosquitoes in Itasca were vicious and numerous, since swamps and ponds in the nearby woods provided ideal breeding grounds. The jobs encountered by the working crews and the forestry students were made very difficult by the stinging hordes. The workmen digging and constructing used smoke smudges to drive away the insects as much as possible but it was only partial relief. Insect repellents were not plentiful or very effective at the time. The foresters used head nets and covered the rest of their bodies with heavy clothes while working in the woods, even though summers in Itasca were often hot and sultry. Professor Cheyney often took his charges into the woods for lectures, and with the help of his constantly burning pipe and sheer determination, resisted swatting the mosquito pests!

MAINTENANCE SHOP

About 1930, a maintenance shop was built near the resident manager's house. The building was of frame construction, with cedar shingles on both the roof and walls for siding. The building housed a workshop, a small woodshed at one end and at the other end a small, gasoline-engine-powered generator was installed. There was also a one-stall garage, large enough for the resident manager's Model T Ford, and later, a Model A Ford car. The building had a concrete floor and was heated by a barrel stove. There was no running water but a well was dug on the outside of the building with a hand pump, making accessability of water much easier, particularly in winter.

The generator output was 32 volts D.C., a standard for home power plants at that time. The generator was hooked to a bank of batteries and regulation of the output was accomplished by a set of electric lights which were screwed in and out of a row of sockets, depending upon the load. A very primitive device but after living with candles and kerosene lamps it seemed like great luxury!

PEACE PIPE SPRINGS

The story of Peace Pipe Springs is always an intrigueing one.The springs are located about a mile south of the Forestry School along the main Park drive. Originally, the spring ran out of the steep bank of the east shore of Itasca, perhaps 30 feet up the bank from the water. The forestry students and faculty members apparently frequently found themselves near the spring in their sojourns through the surrounding territory. The water from the spring was cold and inviting but it was very difficult to get a drink from the water running out of the ground. It was probably Professor Cheyney who got hold of a short length of water pipe from the campus and stuck it horizontally into the bank where the spring gushed forth, causing the water to now run out the end of the pipe and be a good makeshift drinking fountain! Thenceforth, the location was called "Piece-of-Pipe Springs". When finally the site was to become a tourist stop, labelled with signs, the original name was not glamorous enough or through "creative hearing" it became Peace Pipe Springs! Today, the site has a parking lot at the top of the bank and steps leading down to the spring area. It turns out that this site is a particularly beautiful spot to view Lake Itasca so that the Indian name lends much more romanticism to it, even though tourists have no concept of the strange origination of the name.

1927 MEMORIAL ERECTED BY FORESTRY FRESHMAN, LOOKING NORTH ON MAIN PARK ROAD.

Path to cook shack from the bunk house went to right between vertical logs.

SERVICE ROADS

There was a service road cut into the woods southeast of the faculty cabins which serviced the local dump, woodlot, and the ice cutting ramp access to Lake Itasca. The gravel ramp was located several hundred feet south of the campus buildings area, since the shore was fairly level there and made access to the lake much easier. The lakeshore all along the campus area had quite steep banks, making vehicle access difficult. This access ramp was also utilized for launching the old scow and the newer motor launch, both used for student acquatic studies. This road to the launch site probably was originally built by Park Headquarters, since there was originallly a log icehouse near the Green House.

Both of the large boats used at the Forestry School were launched by means of a large trailer, built from a Model T chassis. In winter, the scow was stored on this trailer in the yard of the resident manager, however, the motor launch had its own boathouse for storage.

WOODLOT AND DUMP

The woodlot and dump area were southeast of the faculty cabins, deep in the woods. The woodlot was on a flat, cleared area and was utilized to store the fresh-cut wood for burning on campus. The wood was cut to length, split, and piled here to season for its use by the faculty, student dormitory, cook shack, and the resident manager's dwelling. On one side of this flat woodlot area, the land dropped abruptly into a lower, swampy section. It was over this bank that the dump was established. Since it tended to become quite filled by the end of each summer, the resident manager obtained a burning permit in the very early spring and burned the pile of brush, discarded building materials, cans, and garbage. It became a quite large fire and served the purpose of reducing the bulk and sanitizing the accumulation.

KEEPING THE WATER TANK FULL

While the lake water was still being distributed by the water tank at Itasca, one of the numerous jobs of the resident manager was to start the pump engine at the lake when the tank was low on water. Of course the tank level had to be rechecked periodically in order to shut the pump off when the tank was full or near full. There was a guage on the outside of the tank on the tower to observe the level, but the system required much of the manager's time to operate. Walter Nelson solved a part of the problem by running a water pipe from near the top of the tank all the way to the pumphouse in an underground line. When the tank was nearing the full point, water gushed down the extra pipe to the pumphouse where it poured into a can, attached to a handle, and pushed the handle down, grounding the spark plug on the one-cylinder gasoline engine and stopping

the pump. The can had many holes in its bottom, and when the pipe from the tank stopped running, the can slowly emptied and the spring-loaded handle reset to its running position! A "Rube Goldberg" solution to be sure, but it worked famously and henceforth Walter was relieved of his pump stopping task.

Since the University allotted little money for the operation of the Forestry School at Itasca in the early days, numerous devices were designed and built from whatever material could be scrounged. There was very little manufactured equipment available so whatever items were needed were engineered by the ingenuity of the resident manager and his crew. Examples of this are a home-built rotary mower, made of bicycle wheels and an old gasoline engine, a power rip saw rig for use in the maintenance shop, a snow plow to be attached to the front of a vehicle, and "fire boxes" (devices to hold water hoses for use in case of fire in the campus buildings).

1928 MEMORIAL

Not to be outdone by the 1927 class, the foresters of 1928 also put up at memorial to their class. This time, they chose the entrance to the tree nursery, and put up a large log arch there. This arch consisted of only three large logs, two vertical supports, and a horizontal log joining the two. This arch was also about 20 feet in height, and had two wooden, carved signs suspended from the horizontal joining log. A large steel mesh swinging gate hung from the vertical logs to preserve the integrity of the nursery from the local deer. The gate was wide enough for a car to pass through and proceed through an aisle of European Larch, followed by another aisle of white cedar, which led to the log insectary building.

1929 MEMORIAL

1929 brought forth a new type of memorial, a pair of stone pillars, one on each side of the road entering the campus from the main Park road, and allowing driving access to the bunk house. These pillars were massive, about 4 foot square and about 6 feet in height, capped with a large concrete block, about 4½ feet square and one foot thick. A chain was put across the entrance so that it could only be used by maintenance personnel. The stone pillars had a plaque mounted on them which apparently dedicated them to the class of 1929. This memorial was eradicated probably in the 1950's, when the service road for which it provided an entrance gate had long before been abandoned. Unfortunately, even the plaques have disappeared over the years so no trace of the memorial exists today.

EARLY FEMALE FORESTERS

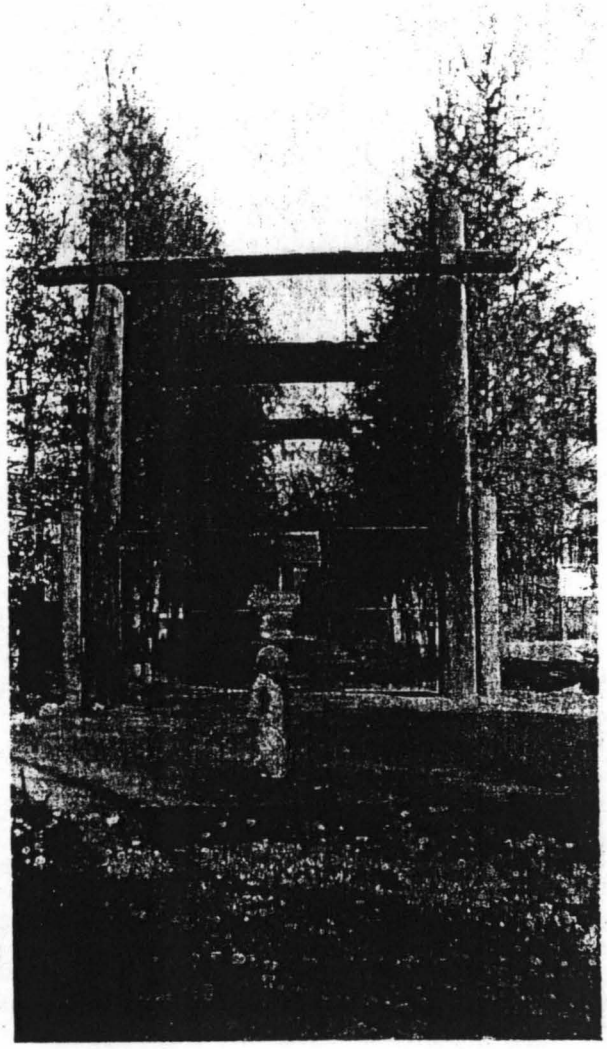
There was one girl forester at Itasca in 1929, Dorothea Cahill. She procured a white horse and rode at the head of the students' parade to the local camp ground and return, culminating in the "burial of the quiz" ceremony. Dorothea graduated with the class of 1932. Female foresters were probably housed in the Green house, since there were no women's residences for students at the time.

The following year, 1930, another girl forester appeared at Itasca--Alice Stuart. She graduated with her class in 1933. There were 30 freshman at Itasca that year.

PROFESSOR L. W. ORR

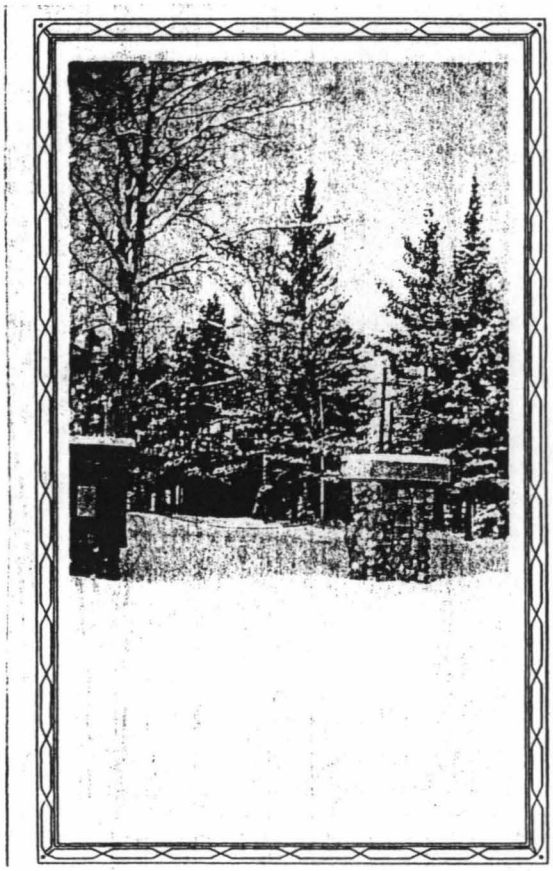
1930 also brought a new instructor to Itasca--Professor Leslie W. Orr, an entomologist. It is not clear how long he taught there but it is believed to be about 3 years. He was also doing research at Itasca, however, he was living in a faculty cabin No. 1 during this period.

In 1931 or 1932, a rather tragic occurrence resulted from an overheated stove in the insectary in the tree nursery. The log building caught fire and burned to the ground. The fire crew from Park Headquarters arrived too late to save any of the contents. Professor Leslie Orr was using the building for his work on his research project for his doctorate. He had left the building that morning on some errand before returning to St. Paul. He had piled his papers on a chair near the door in preparation for the trip, and all were lost. The event is particularly a fixture in the author's mind, since as a child of six or seven years, had seen smoke coming out from under the eaves of the insectary that morning but had not reported the incident. The building was rebuilt at some later time with frame type construction cabin, probably in 1935, since it used log siding similar to the four women's cabins built that same year near the lake shore.



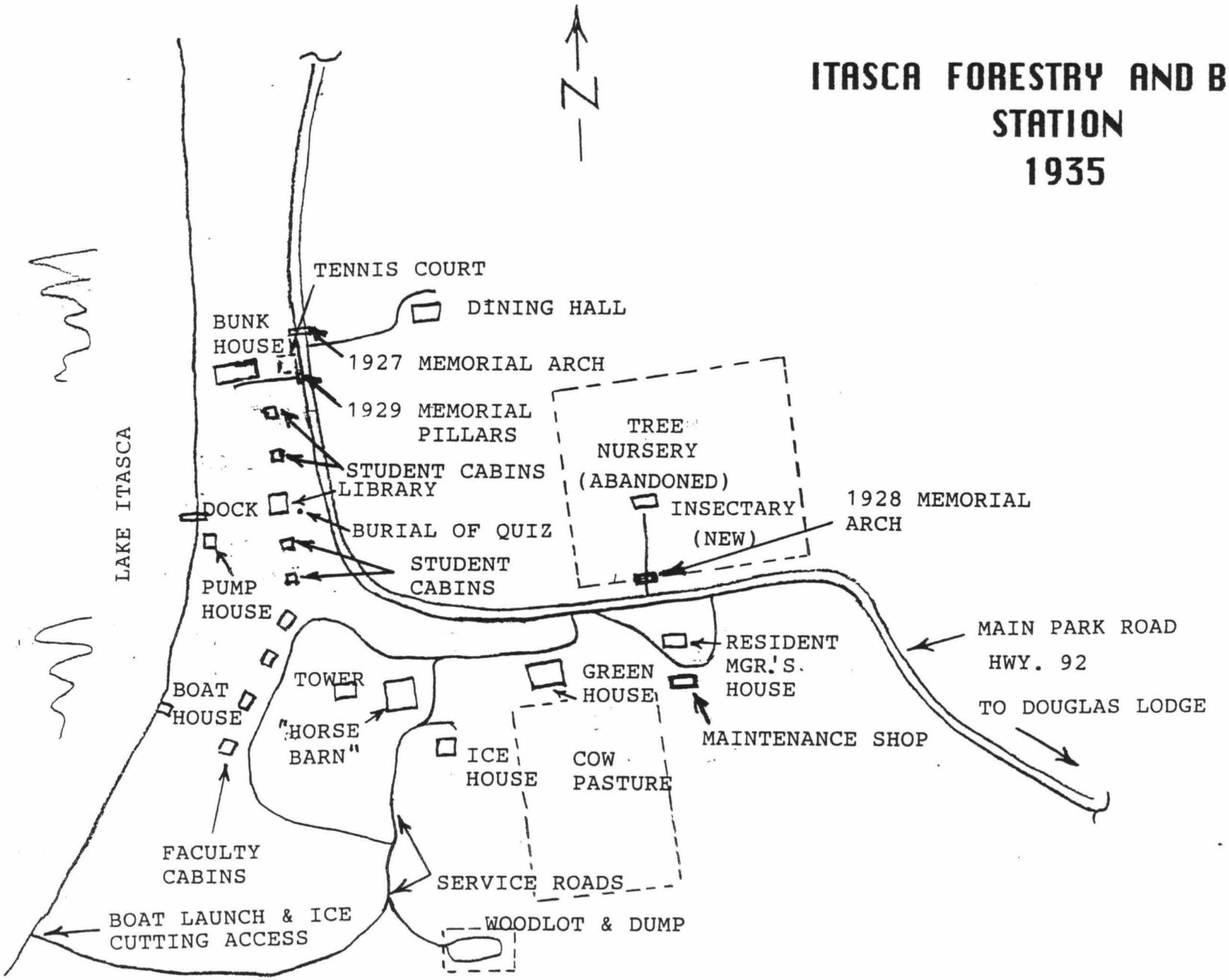
1928 MEMORIAL AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE NURSERY. LOOKING NORTH TOWARD INSECTARY.

Child is Paul Nelson, son of Walter Nelson. Taken in 1935 on main Park road.



1929 MEMORIAL AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE BUNK HOUSE SERVICE ROAD LOOKING WEST TOWARD LAKE, FROM MAIN PARK ROAD. LATE 30'S.

ITASCA FORESTRY AND BIOLOGICAL STATION 1935



A NEW BOAT

About 1931, the old scow, the flat bottom boat used for classes on the lake, was retired and a new boat was purchased from a boat company at Bemidji. The new boat was also an inboard motor boat, but was far fancier than the scow. It had varnished decking, a front and rear seating compartment, and the engine in a covered hatch in the center. About this same time, a new boathouse was constructed on the lakeshore, just below cabin number 3. This boathouse was built into the water such that the new launch could be driven into shelter and stored while in the water. In winter, the boat could be lifted clear of the water by means of bunks and a winch system, and stored clear of the ice.

A road, angling to the north, was cut into the steep lakeshore bank, for vehicle access to the boathouse. Later, when the lakeshore laboratory was built south of the boathouse, a new boathouse road was made by extending the road to the lakeshore laboratory. This road came in from south of the laboratory and proceeded past the west side of the laboratory and continued on past the east side (behind) the boathouse.

The boat survived for a number of years in its original configuration, however, it was difficult to start or work on the engine, since it was buried deep in the dark center hatch. In addition, moving back and forth from the two passenger compartments was cumbersome for classes using the boat. So, in 1940, the launch was brought into the maintenance shop at the resident manager's place and the boat was remodelled by Walter Nelson and Erick Wallin. This was done after the summer usage and completed over winter. The entire center deck was removed and the engine covered by a removeable hood of wood. This allowed a walkway on each side of the center-mounted engine, making access to the engine easier and also allowing much easier movement of passengers within the boat.

Unfortunately, in 1950, the bottom of the boat was found to be rotted and the entire bottom replaced as well as some of the ribs. This job was also done in the maintenance shop by Walter Nelson and Erick Wallin, during the winter.

TREE NURSERY DEMISE

By 1934, the tree nursery work was discontinued, and the seed beds were left to grow up without any further care. The insectary building (after being rebuilt from the fire) continued to be used as a residence by single professors or those who were not accompanied by their families.

BIOLOGY SESSION STARTS

A major change for the School began in 1935. That year was the start of the Biology session, during the latter six weeks

of the summer, from about the first week in August, following the Scoutmasters' University of Scouting week. Since the session was to accommodate both women and men, four new cabins were built on campus. The cabins accommodated eight students each, and were located between the faculty cabins and the bunk house, two on each side of the old log library. The cabins were modern for that time, with a toilet room in each, with work tables and chairs for study. The beds were double bunks. The cabins had log siding, with fake log ends at the corners. They were used for the women during the biology sessions and men occupied them for the forestry and scout sessions.

There were 17 biology students that first year. Dr. Alexander A. Granovsky was director of the session and moved his family into the library. It was not a very suitable home but it was all that was available, since there were four other instructors on campus for that session. The library was a batridden log building, poorly appointed for housekeeping but the Granovskys made it home for them and their three children for several summer sessions.

With the addition of the Biology session the summer became busier with three groups using the facilities with only a week end separating them. The resident manager had to bring in a cleaning crew on the week end between the departure of the Foresters and the arrival of the Scoutmasters, and again the following week end following the departure of the Scoutmasters and the arrival of the Biology group. It became a nip and tuck affair.

CAMPUS ROWBOATS

In 1935, rowboats were beginning to be purchased for the use of Biology students. These boats were purchased out of Biology funds as strongly recommended by Dr. Granovsky. Some Biology students felt that they were pressured into this action, but nevertheless, three boats were eventually purchased. There first was a flat-bottom boat, assembled from a kit by Erick and Walter. It was named Gyrinus, proudly painted on its prow. However, it did not live up to its namesake well, since it leaked quite badly and would have been more appropriately named after an underwater creature! Subsequently, two more boats were purchased, both of wood and round-bottom design. These were from Northland Boat, and much better craft. These boats were subjected to a christening ceremony worthy of the Queen Mary, using water bottles. The two latter boats were named Navicula and Hyalella, apparently for flowers. A canoe was added to the water craft also during this period. The three wooden boats required yearly repair and painting in the resident manager's workshop.

ROAD BYPASS CONSTRUCTION

1938 marked another major change in the campus. The local CCC

camp was only half a mile north of the School and was fully staffed at that time. The main Park road ran through the campus area and was rerouted to bypass the School entirely, accomplished by the CCC's. In addition, part of the original road was torn up and a loop road constructed, with parking places on three sides of the loop. An additional parking lot was constructed east of the bunk house, encompassing part of the original road. The old road going north from the School was obliterated and planted to trees.

SWIMMING AREA IMPROVED

In the winter of 1937/1938, 1500 yards of sand was placed on the ice in front of the station by the CCCs. This sand sunk to the lake bottom in the spring and improved the swimming area greatly.

LANDSCAPING CHANGES

The CCC's also did several landscaping jobs during the 1938/1939 period on the campus. The faculty cabins road was reconstructed, several footpaths were built, guard rails installed at parking lots, a recreational field leveled south of the cook shack, and rustic log signs were built and installed. Trees and shrubs were also planted on the campus.

REA POWER

Later, in early 1941, the power lines to the station were rebuilt and improved in preparation for the addition of REA power to Itasca Park. Late in 1941, REA came in and for the first time there was adequate power on the campus. The early days of REA power were difficult however, with many long power outages. The lines were run through the timber without adequate clearance so many outages were caused by blowing and falling trees. This deficiency was gradually corrected as time went on.

DR. GRANOVSKY'S ARRIVAL

When Dr. Granovsky first arrived in Itasca Park, it was late at night and his car was disabled by stalling (or accident) about a mile south of the forestry station. He walked until he saw the first sign of civilization, the resident manager's house. There he knocked at the back door, which was adjacent to Nelsons' bedroom window. The Nelsons had retired but Walter heard the commotion and started talking to Granovsky through the screened bedroom window. Granovsky had a large, powerful flashlight which he immediately shone directly in Walter's face as he told his story. As the conversation continued, he persisted shining the light in the bedroom window, lighting up the whole room. Mrs. Nelson dared not get up since she was not dressed and the powerful light left no room for modesty! This went on for some time before Walter was able to satisfy Granovsky's problem and get the spotlight out of his bedroom!

PROGRESS WAS INTERMITTENT

As can be seen by the attached table, the development of facilities was nearly stagnant from the building period of 1911-1912 up until 1935. The original ten major log buildings for the school existed for some 23 years during that period with few changes. The exceptions are the enlargement on the bunk house in 1926, and the addition of washroom facilities. Also, the resident manager's house was enlarged with the addition of a small eating area and probably the back entry room, prior to 1928. The school had the partial use of the Green house and another state building near the lakeshore, for at least part of the period. The maintenance shop at the manager's residence was added in about 1930. There was actually the loss of one building in about 1931 when the nursery building burned down.

The start of the Biology sessions in 1935 brought four new student cabins into usage. Presumably the nursery building was rebuilt in that same time period. These five buildings still exist today in modified form, but they are among the the oldest buildings on the campus currently, and they look very similar to their original appearance. Of course, hidden under a new exterior, the original logs of faculty cabin No. 4 still exist. Professor Cheyney would still recognize the familiar interior if he were alive to see it.

The greatest change in buildings came after 1939, when Thor Schantz-Hansen was assigned directorship of the Itasca station in addition to his previously held directorship of the Cloquet station. Schantz was able to obtain funds for many new, badly needed buildings and improvements to the campus until he retired in 1959. He also scrounged material from both the twin cities campuses as well as Cloquet to supplement these funds. With the full cooperation of Walter Nelson and his right hand man, Erick Wallin, a great deal of improvements were made with a comparatively low cost. The labor rate in the Itasca area was around 75¢ to a dollar per hour for skilled carpenters at that time. Walter and Erick worked in the shop all winter building door and window frames and other parts needed for the following summer's building construction.

ORIGINAL LOG BUILDINGS AT ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL

BUILDING	YEARS IN USE
Library (Bat House)	1911-1951
Dining Hall (Cook Shack)	1911-1952
Class Room (Horse Barn)	1910-1946
Faculty Cabin #3	1911-1945
Faculty Cabin #4	1911-1945
Faculty Cabin #1	1912-1944
Faculty Cabin #2	1912-1944
Bunk House	1912-1950
Insectary (Nursery Cabin)	1913-1932
Resident Manager's House	1913-1944

NUMBER OF MAJOR UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS IN USE EACH YEAR

1912	10
1935	14
1959	42
1999	60

PROFESSOR CHEYNEY

Professor Cheyney was a very opinionated instructor and had hard and fast ways to do things. He apparently was not happy with having females in his classes at Itasca--I suppose he felt they did not belong there. Since Dorothea Cahill and Alice Stuart had been at Itasca in 1929 and 1930, he decided that he would do his best to discourage any other girls from traversing that route. Consequently, when Helen Carkin of St. Paul tried to major in Forestry in about 1934/35 era, he flatly refused the request. He also refused to allow her in any of his classes, although she could take as many other forestry courses as she desired! His statement to her at the time was that having a girl in his class would restrict his language too much. Cheyney had a pronounced sense of humor which he readily exhibited to his students.

In the 30's and 40's at Itasca, Cheyney and his wife took a ride through Itasca Park every evening that it wasn't raining. They were very punctual and it was common to see his Buick pass by the resident manager's house at a fixed time of the evening.

For several years, on the 4th of July, Bob Brown and the author put on a very meager fireworks display at dusk in the field in front of faculty cabin 1. The entire Forestry faculty attended. Professor Cheyney always contributed a dollar to supplement our night fireworks equipment. This was a big help since a dollar bought quite a few pieces then. Bob Brown announced each device as we shot them off, since he had a deep and penetrating voice like his father. The few rockets we had did look attractive winging out over Lake Itasca.

BROWNIE

Cheyney and Brownie (R. M. Brown) both dressed in brown breeches and spats, with a brown shirt, when teaching. Brownie was as meticulous and exacting in his dress as he was in his instruction and presented a very commanding figure in the field.

On their journey to Itasca for the start of the forestry session in June, Brownie and Bea usually arrived at a very late hour, such as 10 to 12 pm. Both were meticulous and exacting so it took considerable time to get every parcel placed in exactly the right spot in the car. Brownie's meticulous nature was evident in his teaching, as any of his students were well aware.

HODSON AND MICKEL

When Dr. Alec Hodson and Dr. Clarence Mickel were both at the Forestry School teaching entomology and ornithology respectively, they both lived in the nursery building across from the resident manager's house. Neither ever brought their families to Itasca while teaching so the single men were always relegated to the nursery "insectary".

In the warm summer evenings Hodson and Mickel would appear on the road into the campus running past the nursery gate and would play catch with a snuff can cover! The cover would sail between them just like a frisbee and hop up and down in the air currents, much to the delight of the participants. The two professors had mastered a unique launching technique for the covers that resulted in accuracy and smooth spinning of the disc. The cover edge was held between the third and fourth finger of the throwing person and launched by flicking the wrist and hand in the direction of catcher. Bob Brown and the author watched this performance with awe, admiration, and envy and we were soon on our bicycles, searching the Park ditches for discarded Copenhagen snuff boxes! We practiced diligently when we had our own covers and eventually could do a reasonable job of copying the nursery professors.

Alec Hodson was also very friendly with the Nelsons and would walk across the road to their house to read their paper or discuss the national affairs with Walter. He had a decided eastern accent which was interesting to us midwesterners, and he was a good conversationalist, especially over Freda's hot coffee and cinnamon rolls!

FORESTERS' REPUTATION

The forestry students had a reputation around the Itasca Park area of being a rather rowdy, unruly crew. Like many college boys, they searched out the few drinking establishments in the area and frequented them whenever possible. Bob Sauer, who ran a general store just north of the Park, originally sold beer in his store. At one time a forester arrived in the store with no shirt and was asked to leave by Bob Sauer and clothe his naked body. The student refused and Bob made a believer of him by whacking him with a rubber hose filled with lead shot on his bare hide and backing him completely out the door! Incidents like this from CCC boys also caused Bob to shut down the liquor portion of his establishment.

The foresters also frequented Henry Stevens bar, just across the road from Sauer's, and later Qualle's store east of the Park. However, Douglas Lodge was the place to romance the girls, since there were always a group of young ladies of college age working as waitresses, dishwashers, cabin cleaners, clerks, etc. at that resort. Douglas Lodge was only about 3 miles from the campus and was accessible by water as well as by road. Professor Cheyney said it was easy for the foresters to find Douglas Lodge--they just followed the groove in Lake Itasca carved by all the foresters' canoes before them.

NEW INFIRMARY

Another significant event occurred in 1939--a new infirmary building was built near the bunk house. The Scoutmasters who come to the Itasca campus every year donated money for this improvement. The CCCs built the building. It was the first campus building using the new construction style, which was used on all new buildings henceforth. Rough lap siding was used on the lower half and board and batten siding on the upper half of the building. The infirmary was constructed just south-east of the bunk house.

NEW MAINTENANCE SHOP

In 1939, construction was started on a new, larger shop and garage building at the manager's residence. The old shop was moved about 30 feet to the south and the new building built on the site the former building occupied. This construction was accomplished by the Veterans Conservation Corps, a group of out-of-work World War I veterans. The new building had a 2-stall garage as well as a larger workshop area with benches and storage shelves, and a barrel stove for heating. In addition, a water pump and pressure tank was added to allow drinking and washing water in the garage as well as in the manager's residence. The old building was utilized as a ware-house and boat storage building. The new building was completed in 1940. On the west side of the building, a gasoline storage tank was buried and a hand gasoline pump mounted. This gave the resident manager the ability to buy gasoline in bulk for the University maintenance.

SCHANTZ-HANSEN TAKES OVER

In 1940, a new enlarged woodshed was built at the cook shack. That year Dr. Thorvald Schantz-Hansen took over as director of the Itasca facility as well as the Cloquet station he had been heading up for many years previously. His appointment as director initiated many improvements and additions to the campus which greatly enhanced its functionality. In Dr. Schantz-Hansen's twenty years as director several new women's and men's cabins were built, a lakeshore laboratory was added as well as four other laboratories, a new dining hall and recreation building was built, a new resident manager's house was constructed, all four original faculty cabins were remodelled, as well as additional faculty cabins, and modernization of the electrical and water system was accomplished.

LAKESHORE LABORATORY

In 1942, the NYA (National Youth Administration) built a two-story laboratory on the lakeshore near the boathouse. This allowed acquatic studies to be carried out in close proximity to the source of their sample collections. This building was primarily used by the biology session, and for the first time

equipment could be left on campus permanently instead of being hauled back and forth before and after each session.

WORLD WAR II EFFECT

World War II brought radically reduced enrollments in both the Forestry and Biology sessions and as a result Forestry cancelled the Itasca session for just one year, 1944. Biology classes were not held for 3 years however, 1943, 1944, and 1945. The open and semi-open years gave an opportunity to remodel and repair some of the faculty cabins without disrupting their occupancy. Two of the cabins, number 2 and number 4 were badly in need of repair at that point. Number 4 was the original director's cabin, occupied by E. G. Cheyney and his family since its erection in 1911. This cabin had light stained log walls on the interior as well as a fireplace and a log railed balcony, leading to two upstairs bedrooms. The remodelling preserved these "classic" portions, while removing the rotting front porch and the back door entryway. The kitchen and dining area were modernized and the outside, blackened logs were covered with a framework and rough board and batten and lap siding were placed over the logs, to match the new exterior design of Park buildings. Cabin 2 was stripped of its roof and porch and the four log walls were covered both inside and out with framework, so the logs were completely hidden. Obviously, the walls became very thick, but otherwise its history as a log building was not apparent. A rebuilt porch was installed and the whole building modernized and enlarged. Originally, cabin 2 was the smallest of the four faculty cabins and it had no fireplace. Cabin 1 was also remodelled during this period.

RESIDENT MANAGER'S DWELLING REPLACED

The old log resident manager's house was also demolished in 1944 and replaced with a modern frame house. The Walter Nelson family moved to faculty cabin number 1 during the construction until cold weather, when they were forced to move into the work-shop until the house could be finished, since the faculty cabins were not designed for 4-season usage.

In early 1945, the resident manager's dwelling was near enough to completion for the Nelsons to happily move into their new quarters. Their joy was short-lived when in February they got word of their oldest son, Bob, missing in action in Burma as a B-25 bomber co-pilot. Later, he was declared dead. His body was returned in 1949 and buried at Fort Snelling.

FIRST UNIVERSITY VEHICLE

In 1946, the effect of World War II was deminishing, and Jeeps utilized during the conflict became available as surplus to public institutions. The University had one at the St. Paul campus which was designated for the use of the Forestry Station. This was the first time a University vehicle was furnished at

Itasca. The resident manager was obliged to use his personal automobile for his work prior to this time. Walter Nelson had used first his Ford Model T, next his Ford Model A sedan with a trailer, then a 1936 Ford pickup, followed by a 1940 Ford pickup. Fortunately, the University paid mileage on these vehicles for University functions, but nevertheless, for the Nelsons' personal use, squeezed their family of five into pickup cabs for many years in order to accommodate the extensive University Forestry School usage on the campus.

The "new" Jeep was a welcome addition to the Itasca campus but it lacked a top for inclement weather. However, Walter and Erick Wallin soon solved that (at least for winter) by building a wood removeable cab for the vehicle. This allowed the Jeep to take over the snow plowing duties in the winter also. The snow plow was also a home-built wooden device built by Erick and Walter. It hooked on to the front bumper and did an adequate job on the premises for many years.

RESUMPTION OF CLASSES IN 1945

1945 brought a resumption of Forestry classes after a year of closure due to World War II low enrollment. That year, a new Botany instructor, Dr. Louis W. Rees, started teaching at Itasca. He had been teaching primarily wood technology courses at the St. Paul campus since 1928, when he came from Syracuse, New York. Rees was essentially taking over Rosendahl's botany classes, since Rosendahl had retired in 1943. Louis Rees continued to teach at Itasca until 1962 when he died of cancer in November of that year in St. Paul.

1946 CHANGES

The following year construction of two new laboratories was begun. They were built east of the old log class room (horse barn), which then was subjected to tear down. The old log buildings were gradually disappearing. 1946 also was the last year of teaching at Itasca for E. G. Cheyney, the pioneer who had been present since the first days of the school.

FACULTY AND BUILDING CHANGES IN 1947

In 1947, Cheyney's replacement became Henry L Hansen, a 1935 graduate. At that time, R. M. Brown became director of the Forestry session at Itasca. That year the area north of the bunk house was utilized and four new men's cabins were constructed there. These cabins had no running water since a central bath house was to be constructed in the area the following year. During September a 4H group utilized the school's facilities for a 3 to 4 day session, and would continue for several years thereafter.

MORE CONSTRUCTION IN 1948

The construction of new buildings continued in 1948, with the new men's bath house north of the bunk house and a warehouse built in the vicinity of the resident manager's house. Since lumber and other building materials needed to be kept on campus the warehouse was a welcome addition. Also, the tear down of the old bunk house was begun in preparation for a dining hall/recreation building to be built on the site. Another laboratory was started on the site of the old horse barn.

ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION IN 1949 AND 1950

In 1949, the new dining hall building was begun, a new bachelor's faculty cabin was built (south of faculty cabin 4), a fireplace was added to the resident manager's home, and more men's cabins were built. During 1950, the new dining hall was completed, a cook's cabin was built, and tear down was begun on the old cook shack on the hill as well as the old library. The following year continued the demolishing of log buildings and additional women's cabins were started south of the dining hall.

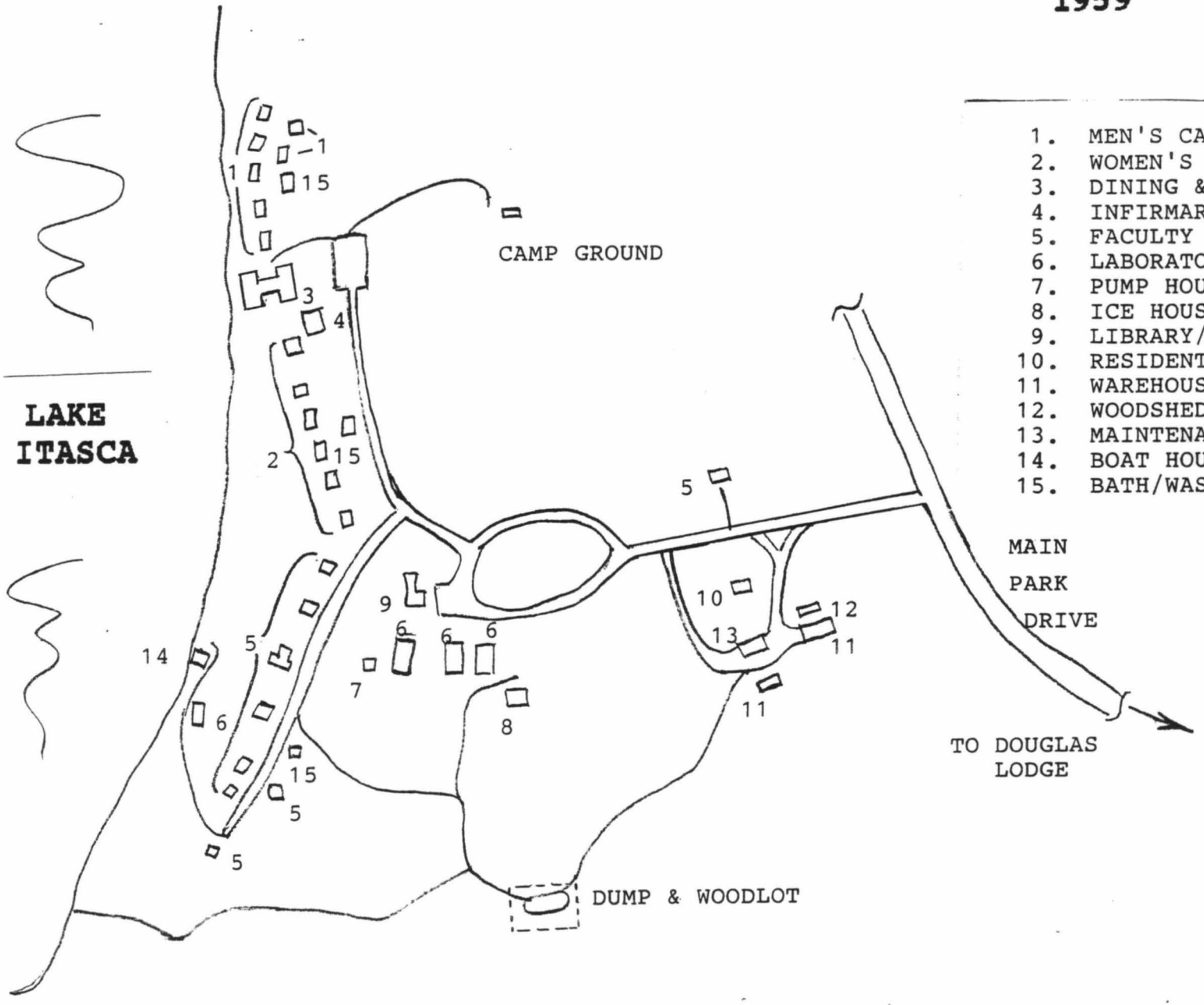
LIBRARY/ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1951 saw the construction of and combined library/administration building on the west side of the loop road. Now the campus had a central building with a telephone!

DIRECTOR'S CABIN

A director's cabin was needed for Schantz-Hansen and his family so faculty cabin 3 was completely remodelled into an attractive, spacious home for the director. This was completed in 1953. That year also added a laundry building for the faculty. A sad event in 1953 also occurred--Erick Wallin, the faithful Swede who had been the resident manager's right hand man for many years, died of stomach cancer in October. He had been a central figure in every new building on the Itasca campus so he was sorely missed. Several forestry professors from St. Paul attended the funeral at Sell Lake Church north of the Park.

ITASCA FORESTRY AND BIOLOGICAL STATION
1959



1. MEN'S CABINS
2. WOMEN'S CABINS
3. DINING & RECREATION
4. INFIRMARY
5. FACULTY CABINS
6. LABORATORIES
7. PUMP HOUSE
8. ICE HOUSE
9. LIBRARY/ADMINISTRATION
10. RESIDENT MANAGER
11. WAREHOUSE
12. WOODSHED
13. MAINTENANCE SHOP
14. BOAT HOUSE
15. BATH/WASH HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF SESSIONS

By 1954, the Biology session was growing in quantity and in recognition, resulting in an exchange of course periods with Forestry. Therefore, the Biology session was increased to six weeks and started in early June, whereas the Forestry session encompassed the latter part of the summer. Since the foresters were no longer at Itasca on July 19, the traditional date of the "Burial of the Quiz", the tradition was finally abandoned.

50th ANNIVERSARY

1959 marked the 50th anniversary of the Forestry School. A celebration was held at the station on July 31st and August 1st. During the events dedications were made to founders of the station--Samuel B. Green, E. G. Cheyney, and John P. Wentling. Also builders of the station were honored--Dr. T. Schantz-Hansen, Walter W. Nelson, and Erick Wallin. Pictures of all these persons were unveiled and were then hung in the recreation hall. About 150 people attended, including former students, professors, maintenance personnel, resident managers, as well as current dignitaries of the University.

RESIDENT MANAGER CHANGES

In 1960, Walter Nelson retired after 32 years of service as the resident manager. At this time there were nearly 60 major buildings in use at the station as a huge contrast to the 12 that existed in 1928 when he started. His replacement, Al Fladung, took over on July 1. The faculty members were surprised and chagrined when they discovered a complete change in building management under the new manager. Suddenly all the maintenance buildings acquired locks on the doors, with permission required from Fladung to use any University tools or workshop. This was in sharp contrast to the trust his predecessor had shown previously with an "open door" policy for all faculty and students. This also ended the neighborly interaction between the resident manager and his family with faculty members which had been common for so many years.

Fladung served until 1967, when Louis Wetzel replaced him. In 1972, Bob Boyle was appointed to the post. The numerous changes were perhaps typical of the modern period, when job changes became commonplace.

MORE SESSION CHANGES

In 1966, the Biology sessions encompassed both the first and second sessions of the summer and had essentially eleven weeks of school. The Forestry session then moved to the four wweeks in September. Since there were now many optional majors in Forestry, no longer did all forestry students attend the Itasca session--instead, only selected major courses were taught at the station.

90th ANNIVERSARY

In October of 1999, the College of Biological Sciences, having recently taken over the administration of the Itasca Station, arranged a Forestry School 90th anniversary celebration, combined with the annual Biological Sciences Alumni Society Itasca weekend. A large turnout of attendees, totalling over 250, came for at least portions or all of the weekend. The housing facilities of the Itasca campus were used as well as resort accommodations in the area. Unfortunately, the weather turned unseasonably cold during the period, hampering some of the activities. The nights were in the low 20's and days barely 40, with a cold northwest wind! The weather had been above normal for nearly the whole fall season so it was just a stroke of bad luck.

A banquet was held in a large tent in the recreation field at noon on Saturday. President Mark Yudof as well as DNR commissioner, and other dignitaries were to speak at the banquet. There were a number of unfortunate incidents which marred the occasion. The tent was cold so that everyone kept their heavy wraps on, the public address system refused to operate, and the "banquet" meal did not approach its billing (probably due to a caterer malfunction). In spite of these discomforts, there were a number of programs to attend during Saturday and Sunday. The author participated by giving history of the campus presentations. The representation of Forestry personnel and alumni was somewhat disappointing but may have been influenced by the weather and lack of adequate publicity. As expected, the Biology representation was very good.

FORESTRY STUDENT POPULATION

Reviewing the Forestry graduates over the early years of the Itasca Forestry School gives a general picture of the usage and growth of the school. Starting with 8 graduates in 1910, the pre-World War I peak reaches 17 in 1911, then gradually diminishes to 1 in 1918. Post-war graduates in 1919 totalled 7 and showed a steady increase to 38 in 1934, followed by a dip to 10 in 1935, and a steep ascent to 89 in 1938. A sharp descent then occurs aimed at the low point of 9 as the effect of World War II is apparent. Post World War II graduates then accelerates rapidly to a high of 108 in 1950. From that point on the rate hovers from around 60 to 100 graduates per year, until the late 1960's, when classes are often far above 100. It is apparent that the school has experienced a steady growth, only interrupted by the two world wars.

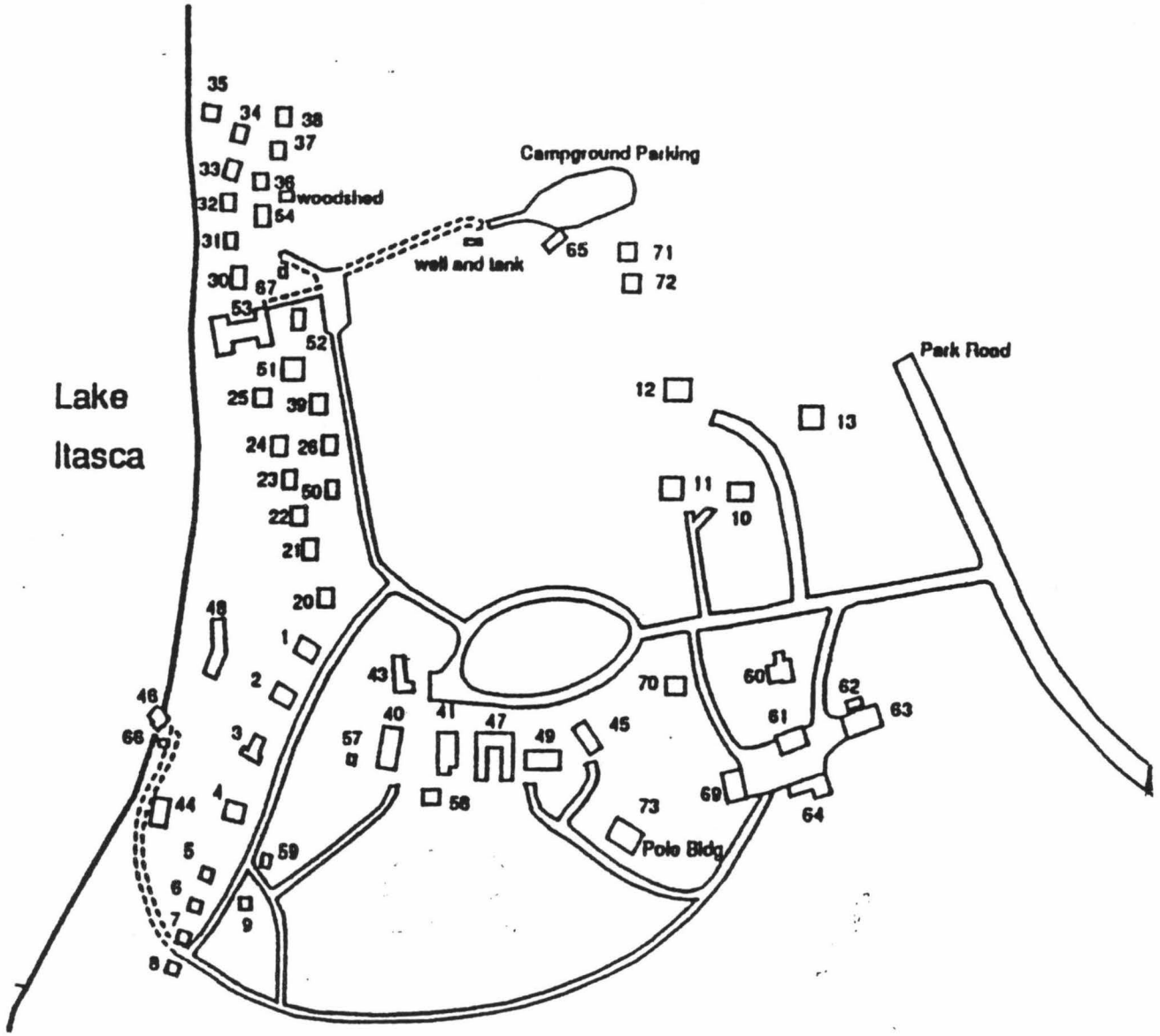
THE MODERN ITASCA CAMPUS

Modernization of the Itasca Station continued and today over seventy buildings constitute the campus. The cabins are equipped with propane gas heaters, refrigerators, complete bathroom facilities, and furnishings. The entire campus is connected to a central sewage system that services all of Itasca Park. These "luxuries" were beyond the wildest dreams of the original inhabitants of the school. In addition, the laboratories are well equipped, a resident Biologist lives on the premises, and several of the buildings are equipped for year-round occupancy. In many instances, metal roofs have replaced the old cedar and asphalt shingles and even some siding has been covered in metal, all to increase longevity and reduce maintenance.

It is beyond the intended scope of this document to discuss these relatively recent changes in detail. Further, the Biology sessions became the major thrust of the school in the later years while Forestry became a relatively minor part of the academic year at Itasca. It is assumed that the recent history is much more adequately covered than the meager documentation found as a basis for this document.

ITASCA FORESTRY AND BIOLOGICAL STATION

1998



1-2	Faculty Cottages
3	Director's Cabin
4-13	Faculty Cottages
20-26	Women's Cottages
30-38	Men's Cottages
39	Women's Cottage
40-41	Laboratories
43	Administration
44	Laboratory
45	Classroom Laboratory
46	Boathouse
47	Research Laboratory
48	Library & Laboratory
49	Teaching Research Laboratory
50	Women's Bath House
51	Infirmatory
52	Cook's Cottage
53	Assembly & Dining Hall
54	Men's Bath House
57	Pump House (well)
58	Toilets
59	Faculty Wash House
60	Resident Manager's Cottage
61	Workshop
62	Woodshed
63-64	Warehouses
65	Campground Bath House
66	Gas Storage
67	Rubbish & Fish House
69	Garage & Maintainance Building
70	Resident Biologist
71-72	Research Cabins
73	Pole Building

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ITASCA FORESTRY SCHOOL
1912